



# IRAQ INVASION

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An Iraqi man crying outside a hospital after bringing the body of a relative to the hospital in Baghdad yesterday.

PHOTO: NEW YORK TIMES

## Hold your applause

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN,  
New York Times

It's hard to smile when there's no water. It's hard to applaud when you're frightened. It's hard to say, "Thank you for liberating me," when liberation has meant that looters have ransacked everything from the grain silos to the local school, where they even took away the blackboard.

That was what I found when spending the day in Umm Qasr and its hospital, in southern Iraq. Umm Qasr was the first town liberated by coalition forces. But 20 days into the war, it is without running water, security or adequate food supplies. I went in with a Kuwaiti relief team, who, taking pity on the Iraqis, tossed out extra food from a bus window as we left. The Umm Qasr townsfolk scrambled after that food like pigeons jostling for bread crumbs in a park.

This was a scene of humiliation, not liberation. We must do better.

I am sure we will, as more relief crews arrive. But this scene explained to me why, even here in the anti-Saddam Shia heartland of southern Iraq, no one is giving US troops a standing ovation. Applause? When I asked Lt. Col. Richard Murphy, part of the US relief operation, how Iraqis were greeting his men, he answered bluntly and honestly: "I have not detected any overt hostility."

Overt hostility? We've gone from expecting applause to being relieved that there is no overt hostility. And we've been here only 20 days. As I said, I'm certain things will improve with time. But for now, America has broken the old order Saddam's regime but it has yet to

put in place a new order, and the vacuum is being filled in way too many places by looters, thugs, chaos, thirst, hunger and insecurity. A particular problem here in the south is the fact that British troops have still not totally secured Basra, the regional centre. Without free access to Basra, the whole southern economy is stalled.

It would be idiotic to even ask Iraqis here how they felt about politics. They are in a pre-political, primordial state of nature. For the moment, Saddam has been replaced by Hobbes, not Bush. When I asked Dr. Safaa Khalaf at Umm Qasr Hospital why the reception for US forces had been so muted, he answered: "Many people here have sons who were soldiers. They were forced to join the army. Many people lost their sons. They are angry from the war. Since the war, no water, no food, no electricity. . . . We have not had water for washing or drinking for five days. . . . There is no law, no policeman to arrest people. I don't see yet the American reign of running the country."

The scene at Umm Qasr Hospital is tragic. A woman who delivered a baby an hour earlier is limping home, and her mother has the baby tucked under her black robe. An old orange Dodge speeds up and a malnourished teenage boy moans on the back seat. A little kid is playing with an X-ray film of someone's limb. In the hospital lab, the sink is piled with bloody test tubes, waiting to be washed when the water comes back on.

What is striking, though, is that after people get through complaining to you about their situation, they each seem to have a story about a family member or

cousin who was arbitrarily jailed or killed by Saddam's thugs. They are truly glad to be rid of him. America did good in doing that, so now we must build a peace we can be equally proud of.

But this is such a broken land. Its spirit was broken by Saddam long before we arrived, and now, because of this war, its major cities and iron-fisted order are being broken as well. Killing Saddam alone will not bring America the thank-you's it expects because Iraqis are not yet feeling free. Only replacing Saddam's order with a better order will do that. "There is no freedom because there is no security," said Dr. Mohammed al-Mansuri, the hospital's director.

We are so caught up with our own story of "America's liberation of Iraq," and the Arab TV networks are so caught up with their own story of "America's occupation of Iraq," that everyone seems to have lost sight of the real lives of Iraqis.

"We are lost," said Zakiya Jassim, a hospital maintenance worker. "The situation is getting worse. I don't care about Saddam. He is far away. I want my country to be normal."

America broke Iraq; now America owns Iraq, and it owns the primary responsibility for normalizing it. If the water doesn't flow, if the food doesn't arrive, if the rains don't come and if the sun doesn't shine, it's now America's fault. We'd better get used to it, we'd better make things right, we'd better do it soon, and we'd better get all the help we can get.

## Arab world riven by fury and despair

BRIAN WHITAKER, The Guardian

As American forces tighten their grip in Baghdad, much of the Arab world appears reluctant to accept the inevitable fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. Some are refusing to believe the news or are sinking into quiet despair.

Some commentators were clinging to a vain hope that the Iraqi leader may have one final masterstroke up his sleeve, while militants view suicide attacks as the Arab world's only chance of escape from American domination.

For many in the Middle East, the invasion of Iraq is seen as a further humiliation of Arabs and Muslims, comparable to the defeat at the hands of Israel in 1967.

But the sense of humiliation is mitigated by a belief that Iraqi forces have put up a much stronger fight, especially in Baghdad, than has been acknowledged in the west.

The suffering of Iraqi civilians has become one of the main themes in the Arab media's war coverage.

"This is no longer a war against Saddam and his regime, if it ever was," wrote Essam al-Ghali, war correspondent of the Jeddah-based Arab News, in a report published yesterday. "It has

become a war against the Iraqi people."

The report described the death of Sami Osama, a truck driver, who was trying to deliver tomatoes through the Iraqi town of Sanawa when he arrived at an American checkpoint. He did not understand the instructions given in English by the soldiers and they shot him dead.

Although hostility towards US policies in the region is widespread - "I am starting to hate America after I used to love it," Fahd Saleh, a 38-year-old Saudi civil servant told Reuters yesterday - such hostility is not new.

"In the Arab world, there is a classical, traditional enemy," said Khalid al-Tarrah, the Kuwaiti spokesman in London. "This traditional enemy has always been the west or the Americans. This is one vision that always existed in the Arab mind."

Analogies with the defeat of 1967 are probably wrong, according to Hani Shukrallah, managing editor of al-Ahram Weekly in Cairo.

"In 1967 the expectations were enormous," he said. "We never imagined defeat, let alone a battle that was finished in six days with no resistance."

"This time, the surprise has been the level of Iraqi resistance. Expectations

were not high and the hope was that Iraq could keep the battle going long enough for some other element to intervene and end the war."

Another crucial influence on the Arab psyche, he believes, is the strength of the anti-war movement in western countries. "This has challenged the whole structure of how people sense their national humiliation," he said. "It has made them feel less isolated, less targeted as Arabs and Muslims."

Others disagree. Samir Ragab, editor of al-Gomhuria, an Egyptian daily, yesterday lamented that Baghdad's resistance was crumbling before the world's only superpower and called for guerrilla war against the invaders.

"The only solution lies in the armed struggle and martyrdom bombers until the aggressors are compelled to withdraw in disgrace," he wrote in a column.

A new audio tape attributed to Osama bin Laden also urges suicide attacks and calls on Muslims to rise up against Arab governments that support the war against Iraq.

"Do not be afraid of their tanks and armoured personnel carriers. These are artificial things," the voice said.

## Britain and France bury differences over Iraq

TIMES ONLINE

Jack Straw, British Foreign Secretary, and his French counterpart today stressed their agreement over the need for urgent international involvement in rebuilding Iraq.

The pair put their deep divide over war - which saw Mr Straw confront Dominique de Villepin at the United Nations - behind them at talks in the French capital. M de Villepin spoke of the "common values" that the two countries shared.

"We would like to express our sympathy that France has with the British people," he said. I would like to reiterate our support for many of the things that Tony Blair has been saying. We have also indicated our hope that the war in Iraq will be finished as soon as possible.

"Also, we would like to stress the urgency, when it comes to the humanitarian effort in the Gulf, that we all work together and that the international community plays an important role."

M de Villepin also spoke of the importance of the Middle East peace process which, along with Iraq and Northern Ireland, was a major focus of President Bush's visit to Ulster yesterday.

"Both the Prime Minister and President Bush committed themselves to a 'vital' role for the UN in the recon-

struction of Iraq and other matters relating to Iraq as well," Mr Straw said.

"We all desperately hope that conflict comes to an end," he added. "It looks as if we may be towards the close of hostilities."

The international community had to come together to "rebuild, reconstruct and redevelop" Iraq, the Foreign Secretary said. But Mr Straw was vague on the key question of the UN's involvement in establishing an interim authority.

"The Government of Iraq has to be from the people of Iraq and of the people of Iraq, of course with the support of the coalition, the UN and the international community."

"That can't happen overnight and in those circumstances since the US/UK forces are the reality on the ground in terms of providing security and stability over time we have to remain there. We have a responsibility to stay there until these other processes are there."

However, M de Villepin stressed the United Nations role. He said: "We need an assurance that a secure system will be put in afterwards."

"We have to maintain that the future of Iraq is going to be done because it is going to be difficult and our responsibility is to make sure things are sorted out there."

WASHINGTON TIMES

How and when, it seems worth asking, will the United States and its allies know they have won the Iraqi war?

On a number of occasions, President Bush has defined the war as an effort to bring about "regime change" in Baghdad, which sounds simple enough: Get rid of Saddam Hussein and his coterie and replace them, as soon as possible, with a more benign, proto-democratic government. But it is not just a matter of driving Hussein & Company from their offices, palaces and hideouts.

As recently as a week ago, Washington talked glibly of "decapitation." But no vainglorious pledge was made to capture Mr. Hussein, "dead or alive," as had been made with respect to the terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, who is embarrassingly still at large, as far as anyone here can discover.

Last Friday, Secretary of State Colin L. Powell said it did not much matter what happened to Mr. Hussein.

"Whether he is there or not at the end or found or not is almost irrelevant," the

secretary told reporters outside the department.

Nevertheless, a considerable military effort has been mounted in an attempt to close off the possibility that Mr. Hussein might escape to the north, by way of an underground command-and-control facility near Tikrit, his hometown.

If the Iraqi dictator has indeed survived so far, he might well survive a little longer. He might even slip out of the encirclement of Baghdad, making his way through the chaos of defeat to try to mount a long, costly underground campaign against first the American occupiers of the city and then the new Iraqi government there. Certainly he could find shelter in any of several Arab countries hostile to the allied forces' invasion, if not enamoured of the old government.

To envision the potential, one need only look a few hundred miles west. The Israelis have "won" every war against Islamic foes, but they are still engaged, after many decades, in combat against shadowy opposition.

As has already been demonstrated in

the current war, many Iraqis who believe that Mr. Hussein's agents retain any power are reluctant to throw in their lot with British and American troops.

To combat that fear, and the tendency of many Iraqis to feel their patriotic impulses bruised by the presence of heavily armed invaders in their midst, the allies have tried to portray themselves as liberators. They have publicised a few incidents of Iraqis applauding allied soldiers.

But they are walking old and treacherous ground. Although the American stay is likely to be shorter, it could generate the same kind of resentment if not handled with a deftness rare in the annals of triumphant armies.

So far, only hints of a forbidden Iraqi weapons program have turned up, in the form of potential components of proscribed Iraqi weapons programs, and many of those could be part of legitimate industrial activities as well. Vials of white powder found in what was described as "a chemical facility" along the Euphrates River appeared after first tests not to be dangerous.

## Fury at US after attacks killed three journalists

THE GUARDIAN

The Arab satellite television channel al-Jazeera is to pull its reporters out of Iraq after one of them was killed during a US air raid on Baghdad.

"I cannot guarantee anyone's safety," the news editor, Ibrahim Hillal, told reporters. "We still have four reporters in Baghdad, we will pull them out. We have one embedded with US forces in Nassiriya; we want to pull him out."

The move followed a day in which three journalists were killed by US fire in separate attacks in Baghdad, leading to accusations that US forces were targeting the news media.

Reuters cameraman Taras Protsyuk, 35, Jose Couso, 37, a cameraman for the Spanish television channel Tele 5, and al-Jazeera cameraman Tarek Ayyoub, a 35-year-old Palestinian were killed during US attacks on their hotel and offices in Baghdad.

American forces also opened fire on the offices of Abu Dhabi television, whose identity is spelled out in large

blue letters on the roof.

All the journalists were killed and injured in daylight at locations known to the Pentagon as media sites.

Central command in Qatar said its troops had been responding in self-defence to enemy fire but witnesses dismissed that claim as false. According to a central command statement, "commanders on the ground reported that coalition forces received significant enemy fire from the hotel and consistent with the inherent right of self-defence, coalition forces returned fire."

But journalists in the hotel insisted there had been no Iraqi fire.

Sky's correspondent, David Chater, said: "I never heard a single shot coming from the area around here, certainly not from the hotel," he said. BBC correspondent Rageh Omaar added that none of the other journalists in the hotel had heard any sniper fire.

Chater said he saw a US tank pointing its gun at the hotel and turned away just before the blast. "I noticed

one of the tanks had its barrel pointed up at the building. We went inside and there was an almighty crash. That tank shell, if it was an American tank shell, was aimed directly at this hotel and directly at journalists. This wasn't an accident. It seems to be a very accurate shot."

Geert Linnebank, Reuters editor-in-chief, said the incident "raises questions about the judgment of the advancing US troops who have known all along that this hotel is the main base for almost all foreign journalists in Baghdad".

Journalists, a watchdog group that defends press freedoms, demanded an investigation in a letter to the US defence secretary, Donald Rumsfeld. "We believe these attacks violate the Geneva conventions," the letter said, adding that even if US forces had been fired on from the Palestine hotel "the evidence suggests that the response of US forces was disproportionate and therefore violated humanitarian law".

Ibrahim Hillal, al-Jazeera's chief editor at its headquarters in Qatar, said

a US warplane was seen above the building. We went inside and there was an almighty crash. That tank shell, if it was an American tank shell, was aimed directly at this hotel and directly at journalists. This wasn't an accident. It seems to be a very accurate shot."

In Doha last night al-Jazeera's chairman, Hamad bin Thamer, said the channel "could not ascertain" if its Baghdad bureau had been targeted by the US. But he dismissed American claims that there had been gunfire coming from the building at the time of the attack.

Mr Ayyoub, 35, a Palestinian born in Kuwait, had not intended to go to Baghdad but as the war dragged on he felt he had to work there, and al-Jazeera agreed to let him work in Baghdad.

His widow, Dima Ayyoub, launched a vitriolic attack on America: "My message to you is that hatred breeds hatred, I cannot see where is the cleanness in this war. All I see is blood, destruction and shattered hearts. The US said it was a war against terrorism. Who is committing terrorism now?"



Journalists held a candlelight vigil for two of their colleagues killed by an American tank shell on Tuesday that destroyed a room on the 15th floor of the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad.

PHOTO: NEW YORK TIMES