

Nice Going:

Did you know that up until the War, Al Qaeda had no viable presence whatsoever in Iraq? Jihadists hated Saddam Hussein and he hated them. He was completely secular. He forced western style customs on Iraq like education for women, suits and ties, pubs and cafes, all of it.

He was so brutal and his security forces so effective that there was no chance for any opposition to take hold. Whenever his people caught a proponent of an Islamic State they issued a cruel and final judgment on the culprit.

Islamic Fundamentalists had as much fear and loathing of Saddam as they do for Israel. Al Qaeda would have aimed for the fall of Saddam just as we did.

But things have changed in Iraq. Four hundred billion dollars later Al Qaeda is a strong presence there. Thirty six hundred dead American soldiers later and jihadism is a powerful force there. Tens of thousands of innocent dead civilians later and Iraq is closer to becoming a radical Islamic state than it ever was under the dictator's regime. Our money, our government and our war have created the jihadist threat in Iraq. That's what we have accomplished. It's our fault.

Nice going.

Now we have the nerve to tell the disintegrated Iraqi "government" to shape up and get the mess straightened out, or else. That's like yelling at the bank clerk who was just shot in a robbery to get herself cleaned up and back to work, or else. That's like a car thief crashing the stolen vehicle and then telling the owner to fix it up, or else. That's like getting beat up on the street and having the thug tell you that he's going to keep it up until you get his point. It's insane.

We ruined Iraq. We did it on purpose. We are still doing it.

I've kind of lost track of the justification for continuing to prosecute a failed war, a war lost. At first it was the dreaded weapons of mass destruction. Then it was regime change. Then it was to establish a democracy in the Islamic Middle East. Fighting terrorism has been consistently argued throughout the war. Now, we are told that if we leave, chaos will replace whatever they call the present situation.

Imagine yourself here in Southeastern Minnesota with Iraqi tanks and Humvees rolling through Caledonia and Rushford and Houston. They have invaded the United States because they truly believe that our President is a potential, imminent threat to them. And they know that America under Islamic law will be a happier, more moral place. They might even mention our weapons of mass destruction.

The troops don't speak our language. When they bark orders at us we don't understand them. They have hired Iraqi-Americans as translators and they expect us to listen to them, and do just as they say. How do you think you would feel about those tanks? How do you think you would feel about those soldiers? How do you think you would feel about those translators?

I suspect you would be angry to the point of insurrection. I wouldn't blame you.

Let's say your children, both less than seven years old, died horribly in an Iraqi air strike. Let's say that the next day you read where the children are included on the 'killed combatants' list. I suspect that you would have a really hard time listening to the reasons why this invasion is going to be good for you, in the long run. I suspect you would do harm to the invaders. I suspect you would be willing to give up your life trying to chase the invaders out.

Why then, is it a mystery to so many of us, that the citizens of Iraq be they Sunni, Shia or Secular behave exactly as we would behave under the same circumstances? It is absurd at best to expect people to cooperate with an uninvited invading army. It is callously cruel to continue to insist that they do so.

There's another thing. After four years our invading army has turned into an occupying army. It has become an Army whose job is to establish order and security for whatever minimal government might exist. I'll ask again. How do you think you would feel if the Iraqi Army installed itself as your local police force? Would you welcome them as the necessary interim replacements for neighborhood faces? My guess is that you wouldn't. My guess is that you would take to the streets and think of yourselves as freedom fighters. Why can't we understand the same position when taken by folks in Iraq?

Could it be that we just can't get ourselves to see our military in Iraq as Invaders, as Occupiers? Is it that the words that catch in our

throats? Or is it the odious history of other armies in other times imposing the will of the mighty in yet another dusty, weak, resource rich land?