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America's Reign of Terror in Iraq

Posted By [Justin Raimondo](#) On March 27, 2006 @ 12:00 am In [Uncategorized](#) | [No Comments](#)

The U.S. is [losing patience](#) with the Iraqis, averred Sen. [John McCain](#) the other day in Baghdad, going into his favorite mode of self-righteous hectoring, warning them they had better get on with the business of forming a government. The senator cited polls showing [declining support](#) for the war, but the [lack](#) of a government is not uppermost in most Americans' minds when it comes to the war. Yes, we are increasingly [cranky](#) – about the [casualties](#), the [cost](#), and the clear [inability](#) of American forces to make a dent in the insurgency – and this impatient mood is no doubt shared, [in spades](#), by the troops on the ground and their commanders, as reflected in the news of the latest American atrocity coming out of that tortured land.

According to the Iraqi police, [American soldiers recently executed 11 people](#) in [Abu Sifa](#), a village about 60 miles north of Baghdad. Among the victims: A 75-year-old woman and a 6-month-old child. The villagers were herded into a single room, where they were all slaughtered without mercy. The Americans then burned three vehicles, went after the villagers' animals, and blew up the house: all of this is detailed in the Iraqi police report, a copy of which was obtained by Knight-Ridder News Agency and [reproduced](#) on their Web site.

This hellish scene was witnessed by Harat Khalaf, a security guard tasked with standing sentinel over oil pipelines, who saw a U.S. Chinook helicopter descend near his home and – wisely – hid in some brush. He watched as the soldiers stormed the house of his brother, Faiz Harat Khalaf, and heard women and children screaming in terror. As the London *Times* [reports](#):

"Then there was a lot of machine-gun fire," he said last week. After that there was the most frightening sound of all — silence, followed by explosions as the soldiers left the house."

Khalaf and the villagers pulled the bodies from the burning rubble, including "four women and five children aged between six months and five years." The police report states: "The American forces gathered the family members in one room and executed 11 people." Here are some [more details](#):

"Khalaf's account was confirmed by a neighbour, Hassan Kurdi Mahassen, who also heard the sound of the helicopters and saw the U.S. troops storming Fayez's home.

"After the soldiers left after apparently dropping several grenades that almost completely destroyed the house, Mahassen said, villagers went to the house searching in the rubbles were they 'found them all [Fayez's family] buried in one room. Women and even the children were blindfolded and their hands bound. Some of their faces were totally disfigured. A lot of blood was on the floors and the walls."

The Americans claim they were after a member of al-Qaeda, a relative of the house's owner, and that the structure collapsed in the firefight. The police report, citing witnesses, says the house was destroyed after the soldiers entered and exited it. The Americans say only four were killed, but the Iraqi police count 11, who are named in the report.

An isolated incident? That's how the Pentagon spins cases like this, but the growing list of American atrocities tells a different story. On the day the horror of Abu Sifa was revealed, *Time* published an account of a similar operation carried out in the western town of Haditha, in which [23 Iraqi civilians were murdered](#) by U.S. troops, "including seven women and three children still in their nightclothes," according to the London *Independent*.

The [official story](#), up until recently, was that they were killed in a roadside bomb set off by insurgents: this has now been retracted, and an official investigation is underway. However the U.S. military still insists that the incident involved a firefight initiated by an explosion: the civilians, the brass aver, were "collateral damage." When the bomb went off, a car near an American convoy was approached, and the occupants were confronted and told to get out and lie face down on the road. They ran and were cut down, amid gunfire coming from neighboring houses.

Locals tell a far different story. According to them, the Americans didn't order anybody to do anything: they simply hauled them out of the vehicle and shot them like dogs in the road. No gunfire was coming from anywhere other than out of American gun barrels.

The Americans, by their own account, then approached a nearby house, where they saw two people, a man and a woman, rush out the back door. They shot the man, and the woman got away. The locals, however, tell it this way: the couple first crossed the soldiers' path inside or near the house, where the woman, who was with her child, asked if she could be allowed to flee. In a moment of benevolence – or simple humanity – the soldiers agreed. Her husband, after a moment's hesitation, followed her. They shot him in the chest.

The Americans entered another house, where, they say, they found four men, brothers: one of them with an AK-47 and another reaching into a closet for a weapon. All four were killed on the spot. A member of the family says the four were forced into the closet, where the Americans shot them.

No one believed the Iraqis, and we heard nothing of their side of the story until a local journalism student shot a [video](#) showing that the bomb cover story could not be true. It also demonstrated that the houses where the victims died didn't have any exterior bullet holes and other telltale evidence of a firefight: [all the bullet holes were inside](#), where the executions had taken place. That similar instances are happening in Iraq even as I write [seems](#) beyond doubt; the only difference being that video evidence debunking the official accounts is lacking.

As Iraqi [death squads](#) troll the streets of Baghdad, [kidnapping](#), [torturing](#), and [executing](#) their sectarian rivals, their American equivalents roam the countryside, doing pretty much the same thing, albeit with more firepower and deadly efficiency.

This proves the president's point about Iraq being a "[central front](#)" in the war on terrorism, although hardly in the way he intended. What it dramatizes in

vivid terms is that the Americans are the real terrorists, the al-Qaeda of the West.

On 9/11, al-Qaeda rammed two planes into the World Trade Center and another into the Pentagon, killing [3,000-plus](#). Since the invasion of Iraq, we have killed [tens of thousands](#) of Iraqis in a systematic rampage that seems to be accelerating in terms of ferocity and firepower. U.S. warplanes have taken to the air, [raining bombs](#) down on centers of insurgent activity: more "[collateral damage](#)" is the inevitable result.

The [revolutionary Jacobin](#) doctrine of global "[liberation](#)" preached by the president and [his neoconservative supporters](#) has resulted in a reign of terror far more destructive than that unleashed by [Robespierre](#) and [Marat](#). In Iraq – and, soon, perhaps throughout the Middle East – U.S. troops are [implementing](#) what just a few months ago was called, by administration insiders, "[the El Salvador option](#)." In El Salvador, American "advisers" [unleashed](#) a wave of terrorist attacks on civilians who supported the left-wing insurgents, on the theory that this would dry up support for the rebels in the countryside. As I [wrote](#) in November of last year:

"We aren't withdrawing from Iraq: instead, the war is being intensified, with the so-called [El Salvador option](#) unleashed, as predicted here [some months ago](#)."

Someone in the Pentagon had the bright idea to "make the Iraqis pay a price" for resistance: the plan, according to [Newsweek](#), was to unleash special forces assassination teams that would hunt down and kill the insurgents. The Abu Sifa massacre may be the work of these American assassins, and Haditha another example of these war criminals in action.

That the same administration [openly advocating torture](#) in the name of fighting terrorism is now engaged in a systematic campaign of terrorism on the ground in Iraq should surprise exactly no one. These people – the U.S. government and its hired thugs – have the moral sense of starving [jackals](#). They are starved for "victory" in Iraq, and have determined to do just about anything to achieve it – including killing women, children, anyone whose death will inspire submission in others. This is the second phase of "[shock and awe](#)" [.pdf] – shocked by the invasion, the Iraqis are now supposed to stand in awe of their conquerors, awestruck by the [monumental cruelty](#) of the occupiers.

The American [advocates of terror and torture](#) as a means of "[liberating](#)" the people of the Middle East at [gunpoint](#) are right, in a sense: there is no other way to achieve the goal they have set for themselves. We have to become a nation of torturers and murderers before we can build ourselves an empire.

As republican Rome [morphed](#) into an Imperial monstrosity, cruelty became essential to the Roman character: [gladiatorial contests](#) were staged for the amusement of the decadent masses, and the [Emperor himself](#) attended the bloody festivities, turning [thumbs up or down](#) on the unfortunate losers.

Today, Americans look on the Iraq war as little more than a form of [entertainment](#), a series of flickering images darting across their television screens, disturbing but no more real than the latest horror movie. Although we are not quite as bad as the Romans – yet – in that no one seems to be enjoying the show all that much (save, perhaps, for [Max Boot](#) and Michael "[Creative Destruction](#)" Ledeen), we are inured, like our Roman antecedents, to the moral meaning of what we are seeing, numbed by our own

powerlessness and a paralyzing indifference. Infantilized by a culture of narcissism and insulated by our [enormous wealth](#), we place a comfortable distance between the actions of our rulers and ourselves. The atrocity stories coming out of Iraq seem unreal, as if they are happening in another dimension, and certainly we bear no personal responsibility for the crimes being committed in our name.

Or do we?

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