

Dead Cities

Some of the key players are urging that the "Fallujah Option" be applied to Baghdad.

By [Chris Floyd](#)

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Of all the war crimes that have flowed from the originating crime of President George W. Bush's unprovoked invasion of Iraq, perhaps the most flagrant was the destruction of Fallujah in November 2004. Now, as ignominious defeat looms for Bush's Babylonian folly, some of the key players in fomenting the war are urging that the "Fallujah Option" be applied to an even bigger target: Baghdad.

What these influential warmongers openly call for is the "pacification" of Baghdad: a brutal firestorm by U.S. forces, ravaging both Sunni insurgents and Shiite militias in a "horrific" operation that will inevitably lead to "skyrocketing body counts," as warhawk Reuel Marc Gerecht cheerfully wrote last week in the ever-bloodthirsty editorial pages of The Wall Street Journal. Gerecht's war whoop quickly ricocheted around the right-wing media echo chamber and gave public voice to the private counsels emanating from a group whose members now comprise the leadership of the U.S. government: The Project for the New American Century.

As oft noted here, PNAC was founded by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Jeb Bush, Zalmay Khalilzad and the now-indicted Lewis Libby, among others. In September 2000, they publicly called for sending U.S. forces into Iraq — even if Saddam Hussein was already gone — as well as planting new bases in Central Asia, putting weapons in space, building new nukes and funding a vast militarization of American society. Being such savvy inside players and all, they recognized that this lunatic program would not be accepted by the American people — unless, of course, the nation was struck by a "catalyzing event" like "a new Pearl Harbor." Who says dreams don't come true?

Gerecht, an ex-CIA man, is a senior fellow at PNAC. He was one of the many munchkins who laid the groundwork for the mass deception that led to the war by constantly undermining any CIA report that failed to conform to the warmongers' highly profitable fantasies of America's imminent destruction by the broken, toothless regime of Saddam Hussein. The intelligence services' many caveats about this bogus threat were placed directly on Bush's desk, as the National Journal reports, but the P-Nackers in the White House tossed them aside. They dreamed of war, and they got it.

But the natives failed to play their part in the imperial masque macabre. As noted here last week, they have churlishly failed to show proper appreciation for being slaughtered, looted, tortured and controlled. Even the Shiites, hailed by the Bushists just a few weeks ago as salt-of-the-earth lovers of moderate democracy, are now denounced as hate-filled

sectarians, even worse than the Sunni insurgents — who are suddenly being courted by Bush’s man in Baghdad, the P-Nacker Khalilzad, the BBC reports.

Not that the Shiite death squads — backed by the U.S.-backed Iraqi government — have been all bad, mind you. Sure, they’ve been kidnapping Sunni civilians, drilling holes in their skulls, beheading them and then dumping the corpses on city streets or burying them in schoolyards. But all of this been “healthy,” says Gerecht, because it has made the Sunnis and Kurds fear “Shiite power.” Or something. To be honest, Gerecht’s column is filled with so many canards, delusions and logical inconsistencies that it often leaves the plane of rational discourse altogether. But its import is clear: By daring to defy Washington’s edicts, the Shiites have gotten too big for their britches and must be brought to heel, along with the rest of the scum who are making the Dear Leader look bad back home.

You think that’s a joke, but it’s not. One of Gerecht’s main reasons for “pacifying” Baghdad in a hydra-headed war on every ethnic faction is because “the U.S. media will never write many optimistic stories about Iraq if journalists fear going outside” the city’s fortified Green Zone. There you have the Bushist vision in a nutshell. The war is not actually happening in the real world, where real people are dying by the tens of thousands; no, it’s really being fought on the monitors of Fox News, CNN and NBC, in the flimsy pages of The New York Times and The Washington Post, and on the overheated airwaves of talk radio. Baghdad must be pacified — like Grozny, like Guernica — so that Americans can see a few more peppy stories on the tube on their way to the ballgame or the mall.

The fate of Fallujah provides a template of the grim fate awaiting Baghdad if Gerecht and the government P-Nackers have their way. Fallujah was encircled in a ring of iron; water, electricity and food supplies were cut off, a flagrant war crime. The city was bombed for eight weeks, then hit by an all-out ground attack with both conventional and chemical weapons — white phosphorous and napalm — that killed thousands of civilians and left more than 200,000 homeless. Among the first targets were Fallujah’s hospitals and clinics, another flagrant war crime. Some were destroyed, killing doctors and patients alike, others seized and closed, all in order to prevent any stories about civilian casualties from reaching the Western media, the Pentagon’s “information warfare” specialists told The New York Times. Once again, manufactured image trumped bloodstained reality.

Perhaps this cup will pass from Baghdad. Perhaps Bush and his P-Nackers will instead move forward with their frenzied plans for a nuclear strike on Iran, as The New Yorker reported last week. But Gerecht’s article is a perfect snapshot of the depraved minds that now rule America. Somewhere, somehow — and soon — another city is going to die.

Annotations

[Returning to the Scene of the Crime \(Fallujah\)](#)

TomDispatch, April 4, 2006

[Can the Shiite Center Hold?](#)

Wall Street Journal, April 3, 2006

[The Iran Plans](#)

The New Yorker, April 10, 2006

[US ‘in talks with Iraq militants’](#)

BBC, April 7, 2006

[Fallujah: The Flame of Atrocity](#)

Empire Burlesque, Nov. 11, 2005

[Ring of Fire: The Fallujah Inferno](#)

Empire Burlesque, Nov. 19, 2004

[Cutting and Running in Iraq](#)

TomDispatch.com, April 6, 2006

[Rebuilding America's Defenses](#)

Project for a New American Century, September 2000

[Inside Fallujah: One Family-s Diary of Terror](#)

Scotland Sunday Herald, Nov. 14, 2004

[Iraq Hospitals Could be Used as Propaganda Centers, says Pentagon](#)

New York Times, Nov. 8, 2004

[US Strikes Raze Fallujah Hospital](#)

BBC, Nov. 6, 2004

[Ghost City Calls for Help](#)

BBC, Nov. 13, 2004

[Fallujah a Sea of Rubble and Death After Offensive](#)

Reuters, Nov. 14, 2004

[A City lies in Ruins, Along with the Lives of the Wretched Survivors](#)

The Independent, Nov. 15, 2004

[Running Out of Patients: Fallujah Hospital Bombing](#)

The Village Voice, Nov. 7, 2004

[Smoke and Corpses](#)

BBC, Nov. 11, 2004

[20 Doctors Killed in Strike on Clinic: Red Crescent](#)

UN Integrated Regional Information Network, Nov. 10, 2004

[US Rolls out Nuclear Plan](#)

Los Angeles Times, April 6, 2006

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Articles by: **Chris Floyd**

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