

Fallujah: Pentagon Plans a High-tech Strategic Hamlet

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It is now official—the United States does not learn from history. It is destined to make the same mistakes over and over again.

In 1962, the Strategic Hamlet program was introduced in Vietnam, based on a British counterinsurgency program used in Malaya from 1948 to 1960. In a dismal attempt to prevent the National Liberation Front from “influencing” peasants in South Vietnam, the United States turned villages into concentration camps—they erected stockade walls and patrolled the villages with armed guards. According to figures compiled by the United States, 39 percent of the South Vietnamese population was housed in these restrictive hamlets (4,077 strategic hamlets were completed out of a projected total of 11,182).

As to be expected, this program was a stupendous failure because the peasants resented living in concentration camps, far away from their ancestral lands. As noted in the [Pentagon Papers](#) , peasants “were herded forcibly from their homes” and locked inside the so-called strategic hamlets and their “old dwellings—and many of their possessions—were burned behind them.” As the Pentagon saw it, the program “was doomed by poor execution,” not the fact that people don’t like being locked up in concentration camps and will resist and continue to resist until things change. But then, as history demonstrates, there were a lot of obtuse “experts” holding down desks at the Pentagon during the Vietnam War—obviously, over the last forty or so years, nothing much has changed.

Fast forward to the present. In the pulverized wreckage of Fallujah, Iraq, the United States will soon introduce the Strategic Hamlet program once again, albeit with significant differences. Under the new plan, according to the [Boston Globe](#) , “troops would funnel Fallujans to so-called citizen processing centers on the outskirts of the city to compile a database of their identities through DNA testing and retina scans. Residents would receive badges displaying their home addresses that they must wear at all times. Buses would ferry them into the city, where cars, the deadliest tool of suicide bombers, would be banned.” In Vietnam, peasants were forced to build their gulags, while in Fallujah male civilians will be organized in “military-style battalions” and, depending “on their skills” will “be assigned jobs in construction, waterworks, or rubble-clearing platoons.” In other words, Fallujans will be organized into chain-gangs and forced to clean up the criminal mess the United States made of their city. For some reason the Pentagon either does not realize or could not care less about the anger and resistance such humiliation will cause.

“You have to say, ‘Here are the rules,’ and you are firm and fair. That radiates stability,”

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Bellon, intelligence officer for the First Regimental Combat Team, told the Globe.

Bellon asserted that previous attempts to win trust from Iraqis suspicious of US intentions had telegraphed weakness by asking, " 'What are your needs? What are your emotional needs?' All this Oprah [stuff]," he said. "They want to figure out who the dominant tribe is and say, 'I'm with you.' We need to be the benevolent, dominant tribe.

No more Oprah "stuff." Instead, the Pentagon believes it can pretend to be a "dominant" tribal leader—sort of an Americanized version of Saddam—and thus win the trust (or fear) of Iraqis, a monumental and culturally ignorant—if not completely bigoted—mistake, one certain to engender even more animosity on the part of Iraqis and empower the resistance further. Bellon understands most Iraqis will continue to hate the United States for illegally invading and occupying their country and butchering 100,000 or more of their fellow citizens but hopes there will be "mutual respect." Exactly how reducing Fallujah to rubble, sniping thirsty and starving women and children, using internationally banned weapons such as napalm, cluster and phosphorous bombs, depleted uranium shells, killing doctors and hospital patients, and crushing the wounded under the treads of tanks will create "mutual respect" is not explained.

Like an act from some macabre theater of the absurd play, the Pentagon declares that converting the bombed remnants of Fallujah, with its interred civilians, into a concentration camp—with the latest invasive technology instead of stockade walls—is an effort to create a "model city." In other words, the Pentagon and its Iraqi stooges plan to use "coercive measures" in other Sunni cities; i.e., they will bomb, invade, kill thousands of people, and then "reconstruct" the ruins to resemble something out of a here-and-now version of the dystopian movie *Minority Report*, complete with retina scan terminals and an omnipresent police state dominating every aspect of life.

"It's the Iraqi interim government that's coming up with all these ideas,' Major General Richard Natonski, who commanded the Fallujah assault and oversees its reconstruction, said of the plans for identity badges and work brigades." Of course, the "Iraqi interim government" does not bend over to tie its shoe laces first thing in the morning without permission from Bush and the Pentagon. However, pretending Allawi and Crew, handpicked by the United States and almost universally hated by Iraqis, are calling the shots looks good, especially with a rigged election right around the corner. Iraqis, of course, know better, even if a somnolent American public—ultimately responsible for mass murder and war crimes perpetuated by its "elected" leaders—has not a clue about what is really going on.

Naturally, this "firm hand," as Lieutenant Colonel Leonard DiFrancisci characterized the plan for Fallujah, will fail—and fail miserably, just as the Strategic Hamlet program did in Vietnam. If the Pentagon believes it can lock out the resistance, force it out in the desert where it can be conveniently and uniformly liquidated with B-52s and artillery, it is seriously deluded. Nothing short of killing every male of military age will stop the resistance in Iraq.

If the engineered massacre of Fallujah is any indication, no doubt the Pentagon has entertained such a terrible contingency.

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