

## “Fixing the Problem” in Fallujah

BBC Radio Orwell Reporting for Duty

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Under the headline “Fixing the Problem in Fallujah”, the BBC Radio 4’s Website (7/11/04) tells us

“Troops say they are ready to reclaim Falluja for its citizens”

That is, what’s left of Fallujah and its citizens after almost continuous pounding by the US since last April. So as far as the BBC is concerned Fallujah is merely a ‘problem’ that has to be fixed, what like a leaky pipe? In contrast the following puts the BBC’s government-inspired propaganda into some kind of context

“I began to count out loud...as the bombs tumbled to the ground with increasingly monotonous regularity. There were 38 in the first half-hour alone... The perimeter of [Fallujah]...is already largely in ruins. The crumbling remains of houses and shell-pocked walls reminded me of my home town Beirut in the 1980s at the height of Lebanon’s civil war.” (Hala Jaber, a reporter for the Times)

The BBC report doesn’t even mention the bombing! Instead it describes 500 and 1000 lb bombs thus

“With flashes in the night sky and the sound of automatic fire marking their progress, US ground forces moved through the outskirts of Falluja.”

Thus “fixing the problem” is the tried and tested method of colonial occupation, destroying everything that stands in the way of installing ‘democracy’ in Iraq. Bombs are now merely “flashes in the night sky” (well it was Guy Fawkes night this past Saturday), the reality has been utterly expunged by the BBC story. The article also reinforces this sanitised, official reality by describing bombing without actually mentioning that bombs are being dropped

“The sound of war-planes overhead was constant until dawn.”

So what were they doing if not dropping bombs I wonder? Sightseeing? Yet occasionally, even the Centurians of the imperium reveal a reality that the BBC will not talk about when

one of its own says

“[Iraq is] a huge strategic disaster, and it will only get worse... The idea of creating a constitutional state in a short amount of time is a joke. It will take ten to fifteen years, and that is if we want to kill ten percent of the population.” (Lt. Gen. William Odom, Director of the National Security Agency, 1985-88)

The BBC report goes on to tell us

“They [the US] swept into Iraq in a short, victorious campaign, and quickly settled down to nation-building and peacekeeping.”

This is bizarre, Alice-in-Wonderland ‘reportage’ that has nothing to do with the reality of at least 100,000 Iraqi deaths since the invasion and occupation. Nation-building? Peacekeeping? Any reporter worth his salt would know that Bush and his capos long ago told us that the last thing on their minds was ‘nation-building’ and indeed are on record as saying that the objective of occupying Iraq is anything but nation-building.

“We are not in Iraq to engage in nation-building — our mission is to help Iraqis so that they can build their own nation.” (Donald H. Rumsfeld, Washington Post, September 25 2003.)

Indeed, even the right-wing, pro-Bush Cato Institute (motto: Individual Liberty, Limited Government, Free Markets and Peace) says

“The U.S. invasion of Iraq wasn’t part of a nation-building scheme. Ironically, beginning with the First Gulf War and ending with the ouster of Saddam Hussein, U.S. policies interrupted and eventually ended a process of nation building led by Saddam.”  
[www.cato.org/dailys/06-20-04.html](http://www.cato.org/dailys/06-20-04.html)

The BBC report is in fact promoting the fiction of US attempts at ‘nation-building’ designed to obscure the real aims of the occupation, a fact that the mouthpieces of the Bush administration are all too willing to express even if the BBC ain’t!

“Iraqi gains are very welcome, but they come as a happy byproduct of the coalition pursuing its own interests, not as the primary goal. It is proper to put coalition forces’ lives at risk only to the extent that liberating and rehabilitating Iraq benefits the United States, the United Kingdom and the other partners.” ‘War as Social Work?’ by Daniel Pipes New York Post May 6, 2003

Pipes, unlike the BBC, has no hesitation in spelling out the real reasons for the occupation and indeed does all he can to disabuse us of such idealistic notions as ‘nation-building’ when he says

“When the population does not see the benefits to themselves of warfare, U.S. soldiers are pulled from the battlefield, as in Lebanon in 1984 and Somalia in 1993. There simply is no

readiness to take casualties for the purposes of social work.

“So, by all means, bring on “Iraqi Freedom.” But always keep in mind, as President Bush has done, that the ultimate war goal is to enhance American security.”

And there you have it from the horse’s mouth so-to-speak. The BBC on the other hand, would rather blow it out the other end of the equine.

Destroying them to save them:

““The competence and compassion of my marines will mitigate any civilian casualties,” said Lieutenant-Colonel Gareth Brandl when asked how he could control where all this firepower would be directed in the narrow streets and alleys of Falluja.””

Can corpses feel compassion? This is by the way the same Lieutenant-Colonel Gareth Brandl who said

“The enemy has got a face. He’s called Satan. He lives in Falluja. And we’re going to destroy him”

Compassion or revenge? The same BBC report actually uses this chilling quote (twice) but without comment (need we ask why?).

‘Precision-guided munitions’ well may be precise (to within 10 metres assuming they find their ‘target’) but consider that a 1000lb percussion bomb has a destructive radius of nearly half a kilometre and the notion of ‘precision’ takes on an altogether different dimension especially for the people living in small, closely-packed houses.

The ‘embedded’ journalist who wrote this piece of propaganda, a certain Paul Wood, also neglects to tell us that ‘embedded’ is newsspeak for censored, a fact that has been conveniently (and quietly) dropped since the beginning of the occupation. His objectivity is revealed for the sham that it is when he tells us

“At our forward base, rockets from the insurgents fizzed overhead a couple of times a day, sending the marines scrambling for cover.”

Note that he describes the forward base of the US Marines as “our[s]” thus dispelling the fiction of the much-vaunted ‘objectivity’ of BBC journalism. He goes on

““We’re gonna whack ‘em,” he told a roomful of newly-embedded journalists.

“This is not bloodlust. The marines know better than anyone the reality of combat.””

But clearly Wood is not interested in the reality of “whack[ing]” the inhabitants of Fallujah. Such ‘little slips’ of the pen are commonplace as the complacency and sanctimonious drivel

of the state-run media gears up to justify the extermination of Fallujah. The piece ends with the following

“But for the highly-professional marines, Falluja is also a return to the simplicity of combat after the complexities of peacekeeping and an enemy that never shows itself.”

And indeed, the article reiterates the idea that the Iraqis are a sneaky a bunch of bastards who won't fight 'fair' like our 'professional soldiers'

“...roadside bombs, suicide bombers, booby traps, bombs thrown from roof-tops, mosques used as sniper positions, and a small group of Islamist fighters who believe they are about to seek martyrdom in a holy war.”

Thus the BBC reinforces the racist stereotype of the 'fuzzy-wuzzy' in the immortal phrase of Rudyard Kipling who are, according to Paul Wood only fighting to seek a place in heaven. Aside from this the reality and futility of destroying the people in order to save them is perhaps best illustrated by the following extract

“In 1995 the Russians pounded Grozny until the neighbourhoods harbouring Chechen fighters were reduced to rubble but, nine years on, rebels are still blowing up Russian soldiers with booby-trap bombs.” ‘Russia’s Chechnya Wars 1994-2000: Lessons from Urban Combat.’

Hence, the propaganda effort is revealed as futile by the very people who are orchestrating the Fallujah “fix” as the BBC describes it. For us the issue is how to ‘fix’ the BBC’s blatant propaganda campaign on behalf of its masters in Downing Street. One way may be to write to the manipulators of reality at Broadcasting House and tell them that such blatant distortions of reality are not appreciated either in Iraq or here.

Author’s Note

(See also the Medialens piece [The BBC – Legitimising Mass Slaughter in Fallujah](#) )

Write (politely but firmly) to Paul Wood

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