

Shellfire and Damnation: The Never-Ending Shock and Awe Barrage of Baghdad

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The dwindling band of armchair cheerleaders for the war in Iraq often like to point to the end of World War II as a comparison point for rebuilding conquered lands. Of course, much of the time, the cheerleaders simply concoct fantasy scenarios and falsified histories in a pathetic attempt to steal the gravitas - and competence - of that momentous time for their own tawdry criminal adventure. For example, Condi Rice and ashcanned Pentagon honcho Don Rumsfeld have risibly compared the full-blown, years-long Iraqi insurgency, which has killed more than 3,300 U.S. troops, to the "Werewolf" organization of post-war guerrillas that the Nazis sketchily planned in the waning days of the war - and which was never activated, because it didn't really exist. Not a single American soldier was killed by "insurgents" or "dead-enders" in occupied Germany and Japan in the years following the war.

Then there are people like the "eminent" historian Victor Davis Diehard Hanson, who, as Greg Sargent and many others have noted, just makes crap up out of nothing, writing last week in the Washington Post that this period of the Iraq war should be compared to WWII's dark hour before triumphant dawn in, er, December 1945, when the war was long over in both Europe and Asia.

But even if you granted these bloodthirsty twerps their ludicrous comparison - between a war fought to stop military aggression and the war of military aggression that they themselves have launched and/or lauded - how should we deal with this report from Iraq: "US Launches Artillery Barrage in Southern Baghdad"? Surely not even the most pig-ignorant fantasist or cynical lie-monger would pretend that Allied forces were launching artillery attacks in Berlin and Tokyo in 1949, four years after the "mission accomplished" of VE and VJ Day?

Yet this is where we are today in Baghdad at a similar point in the occupation, as Reuters reports, in a small, brief story that was, naturally, ignored by most of the corporate media, where news of the never-ending aerial and artillery bombardment of Iraqi cities is kept discretely out of view:

The U.S. military in Iraq launched an artillery barrage in southern Baghdad on Sunday against suspected insurgent targets, with two dozen loud explosions shaking the southern outskirts of the capital....The Iraqi police said the artillery was being fired from the U.S. Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad into the al-Buaitha neighbourhood of Dora, a volatile district that is a Sunni insurgent stronghold.

Think of it: launching artillery shells into residential areas of a city that you supposedly conquered - sorry, "liberated" - four years ago. And in fact, the only thing that made this

assault newsworthy, according to Reuters, was that it happened in broad daylight: " Artillery blasts have been heard in the evenings but they are rare in the daytime," the story noted.

Despite all the best efforts of the professional liars and the feverish fantasists, there is no comparison between World War II and the ungodly quagmire that Bush and his willing executioners have wrought in Iraq, except in one respect: they are both the product of a war crime — wanton military aggression.

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