

The End Of Warfare

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Against the most heavily armed opponent in the history of War, Fallujah has still not let itself be “taken” to date. The mightiest military machine in history has met its match. A turning point in military affairs? The end of warfare, as practiced by the Americans - the application of overwhelming force to obtain a victory?



AP STRENGTH OR DESPAIR? US Soldiers re-enact *Ben Hur* prior to Fallujah assault 

Fallujah per se, on the face of it, is not a strategic or a militarily significant target. It however represents the “great challenge” to the US/UK’s military occupation of Sovereign Iraq since April 2003.

In the first siege of Fallujah in April 2004, the Iraqi Resistance inflicted a severe defeat on the Americans.

In April 2004, while over 1,200 Iraqis were killed, blown up, burnt or shot alive by the Americans — two thirds of them civilians, mostly women and children — while 2,000-pound bombs were falling on the the city, AC-130 Spectre gunships were demolishing entire city blocks in less than a minute and of course silence of the plop as Iraqis targeted by marine snipers hit the ground. Nonetheless the operative portion remains: the Marines were beaten back in no uncertain terms. This was followed by a “truce”.

The truce did not hold for very long.

This humiliation of the American military was spun as a “strategic retreat” but the desire to get rid of the “weeping sore that Fallujah was” has been on top of the US agenda since then.

Fallujah represented a “stellar act of defiance” one that allowed the resistance to “actually secure and control a city, and to beat off the US military”

The second formal large scale assault on Fallujah (Nov./Dec 2004) pitted images of the world’s most powerful military force against fighters in tennis shoes, wielding homemade rocket launchers. There were three declared tactical objectives.

The first was to either kill or capture the Jordanian born “terrorist” “Abu Musab al-Zarqawi” (if indeed he exists) and to “battle and destroy some 4000 to 5000 suspected fighters”.

The Americans also vowed to “liberate” the residents of Fallujah from “criminal elements” and to “secure Fallujah” for the January elections.

Lastly, it appears an additional declared tactical/political objective of the American Military’s task was to engage in a “fight of good versus evil”. Additionally it appears (presumably per their intelligence reports) that the mission also was to “destroy” “Satan” since it appears that “he lives in Fallujah”

On the face of it, it appears as if none of these tactical/military objectives have been met, including, it appears, the desire to presumably meet Mr Satan, resident of Fallujah.

As for the other very laudable and rationally quantifiable objectives including that of stuffing democracy into a city by simply obliterating it, all of these seem to be a bit astray.

48 hours into the offensive, the official narratives were filled with reports that Zarqawi (if indeed such a entity exists) may have “slipped outside” of their perimeter defenses.

This of course left Mr “Satan” still in residence together with the rest of the unfortunate inhabitants of the “militant stronghold”. The city of 300,000 residents had perhaps an estimated 40,000 civilians left per the US military. Since this estimated number included 5000 resident “militants”, one can presume that the rest (per the US military) would be civilians.

The actual civilian count remaining in the city on the 8th of November is around around 60,000 to as much as 100,000 since males between the ages 16 and 60 were disbarred by the US military from leaving the city.

One can also infer the most vulnerable—the poor, the old, the women, children and the sick—continued to reside in their city in significant numbers — of the order of 40,000+

With the “target softening” bombing raids that killed a few hundred civilians in the first week of November, the first formal target of the US military armored assault was doctors and the nurses. These were the first to be eliminated as these were “legitimate military target” and since “insurgents” were “forcing the doctors there to release propaganda and false information”.

The assault has left as many as 10,000 civilian dead—perhaps much much more . The Red Cross/Red Crescent estimate was upwards of 6000 as of November 25th. Till date no formal Red Cross/Red Crescent operation has been allowed in the city.

What the images of Phantom Fury did not convey is that this assault is the largest concentration of heavy armor in one place, since the fall of Berlin. This was the first time

since World War II that “an American armored task force” has been turned “loose in a city with no restrictions”.



More to the point, the force of as much as 20,000 soldiers (12,000 to 17,000 American/coalition soldiers, about 2000 odd Iraqi “National guards” and perhaps 1000 odd *peshmergas*) were supported by an estimated 1100 to as much as 2000 armored vehicles and tanks. Air support was largely carrier based out of the gulf and B-52’s from bases outside of Iraq.

The armor alone represents the heaviest ever concentration of armor since the fall of Berlin (1945) in one place against a single military objective.

Phantom Fury was officially underway on the 8th of November and declared to be a sweeping victory on or about the 15th of November.

Thereafter the military communiqués and the press reports have been limited to occasional deaths in the “Anbar province”. That all of Fallujah is under “coalition” control since then i.e on or about November 15th 2004. Since then detailed stories on Fallujah in the official narrative have stopped completely or refer to action/discoveries between the 8th and the 19th of November 04.

There is no evidence of what has transpired save intermittent but very very regular losses attributed to “pockets of resistance” in the “Anbar Province”. And, yes, reportage on the brand new movie on Fallujah starring Harrison Ford.

Now for a moment, consider the substantive anomalies in the official discourse. Consider one such example- Satellite Imagery of Fallujah (block by block including “after action”) available to the media till the 15th of November and carried in graphic detail day by day from the 8th of Nov. through the 15th stopped abruptly. There are no explanations.



Courtesy: globalsecurity.org

There are no satellite pictures of Fallujah available in the public domain after November 15th.

Or consider that the Red Cross/Red Crescent has not been allowed to enter the city in any substantive manner. Today is the 20th of December and it has still not been allowed in.

Or consider another break in the regular stream of consciousness. No reporter has set foot in the city on or after the 22nd of November.

A “Great Victory” like this and no footage?

These anomalies are noteworthy. Therefore it is very unclear whether this is indeed the case or, as a matter of fact, the converse is.

Fallujah has not been taken. Not only has Fallujah not been taken, but the coalition forces

have staged several retreats and are now confined largely to the outside of the city.

The Iraqi resistance is currently in control of most of the city and have forced back at least three of the largest armored assaults in recent history.

In fact, one can make a claim that this was the largest series of armored assault ever. The objective is 16 sq km and if one were to normalise over time and term for incremental intensity in firepower that this represents, then these are historically unprecedented. Now if these were not only repulsed, but perhaps *defeated*, it leads to something that ought to be examined more carefully.



Despite being flattened (perhaps about 12,000 to as much as 20,000 homes out of an estimated 50,000 razed) by the application of, as US Army Gen. John Abizaid put it, “more military power per square inch than anybody else on earth”.

Curiously, the US general then very very strangely goes on to add: “If you ever even contemplate our nuclear capability, it should give everybody the clear understanding that there is no power that can match the United States militarily.”

Oh. Let me contemplate the nuclear capability of the US. Never mind. It is a bore.

So?

The General also said, when talking about generating “more military power per square inch than anybody else on earth”. that “every one knows it”. Oh. The words of the General-the mightiest general of them all-Commander Centom, do not appear to have been heard. At least, the Iraqi resistance has not heard them.

The mightiest military machine ever in world history with the mightiest firepower the world has ever seen has been mightily trying to capture Fallujah. But no luck so far.

Instead the Americans faced an opposition that broke the back of the assault. Instead of “breaking bone by bone” and crushing “the backbone of the insurgents”, it seems that the same has been done unto them as they were planning to do unto the resistance.

At the peak of the assault, the Americans held no more than 35-40% of Fallujah (largely the north on or around the 18th of November) Thereafter, they appear to have been steadily repulsed and in fact the coalition forces currently have been repulsed to where they were on November 13th or thereabouts and to the outskirts of Fallujah.

Now consider the fate of the rest of the occupation. It is in tatters. The mightiest military in the world cannot control an 8 km stretch of road, perhaps the single most important road in all of Iraq – the Airport Road from the center of Baghdad to the airport. The purported troop concentration is 120 soldiers per km of a open road and despite that the Australian defence minister could not even make it to the green zone and simply flew back from the airport.

Unlike Vietnam, where the Americans were largely in control of the cities for most parts (save Tet, and even there complete control was not lost), the US/UK garrisons are isolated in

the middle of a hostile population.

They cannot even traverse a km or two out of the “green zone”. Their supply convoys have come to a standstill over the last month and a salvage operation of re-supplying by air has started over the last 10-12 days. Air supplies are limited and there is no reason to believe that these can be significant (a max of 400 tonnes a day, slated to rise to 1600 tonnes a day against an estimated minimum 20,000 odd tonnes needed daily to keep a force of 160,000+ fed, watered, armored and resupplied).

The 300 mile long supply line is toast. Well, at least any thing dark, metallic, armored or otherwise. (4000 pounds of armor on a humvee that can carry a max load of 5000 pounds) Can it move? And even that is not helpful – in the words of the great military strategist, Rumsfeld, circa Dec 04, even tanks blow up. Why bother at all?

Against the most heavily armed opponent in the history of War, Fallujah has still not let itself be “taken” to date (As of 20th Dec, 2004).

Fallujah and indeed the rest of Iraq post April 2003, heralds “supersymmetrical” warfare and the end of conventional warfare. This represents a turning point in military affairs – the end of warfare—as practiced by the Americans –i.e the application of overwhelming force to obtain a victory.

Consider one such example. A RPG 7 can travel up to 300/700/950 meters. At 300 meters, even a basic warhead can penetrate 330 mm of steel armor. Yes, 33 cms, 13 inches—that is a lot of steel. The projectile would cost perhaps \$30-40. Conservatively, a squad of 3 armed with RPG-7s have more than a fighting chance against a M1 Abrams. In close urban quarters, the advantage that the tank had (in say open ground in a conventional war) is completely lost.

The cost/personnel advantage is noteworthy. With minimal or no training, just about any one can operate a RPG. A squad of say 3 would cost perhaps no more than \$5000 to equip. Against this, the M1 Abrams (“the mightiest tank”, 70 odd tonnes of steel, a few million a pop).

Now consider the mightiest Gun in the West against the rookie squad of three. Throw in a street. Add cover (even rubble will do, in fact quite nicely, thank you)

Even odds?

Now consider for a moment. Consider a force of say a few thousand men — the best in the business and certainly the bravest men on the face of this planet—say no more than 3000, anything more and it would be one sided. 3000 against 12,000 to 20,000 sounds about right.

Now add ingenuity, intelligence and passion and a good reason to be very very angry. Throw in a just cause. In fact, the “most just cause of all”.

Now consider that these are equipped with only say RPG 7s as well as say RPG 9s, a few dozen Strellas, a few thousand modified versions of the S5K rocket, basic anti-aircraft guns, a few hundred tonnes of say c4/semtex (it is quite cheap), a few thousand fin stabilised rockets (52 mm to 152 mm), basic artillery and mortar (say 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm shells), a few SAMs (say SAM7 and SAM 9), a few thousand grad rockets, faithful ole

Kalashnikovs, a few hundred sniper rifles with say .50 mm explosive ammo. It may also be possible that few Samud and Abgail missiles (range of 100 km) are available. These are not very large missiles. Add a few more, nothing fancy again—say, the Tariq and Katyusha, very very basic indeed).

There is more, but you get the idea. Not very state of the art weapons, far from it. But very very functional. Now, consider the sheer amount of counter offensive power these represent.

Add to that pre-prepared defensive positions, not very fancy for sure, but very functional and very very functional minefields with a variety of triggers. Throw in, the “most ingenious” booby traps ever.

Add the Iraqi resistance—the bravest of the brave—operating these. Well now, it is state of the art. *The State of the Art of Urban Warfare*.

Oh yes, And yes, how can I forget toys. Well, one needs to buy those since “remote controls from toys” (Well at least as per the American Military) are a primary trigger in IEDs.

So we add a few 10s of dollars per toy car and remote kit, say from your local K-mart.? Turns out that an army cannot be equipped from K-mart, to quote the great military tactician Rumsfeld once again, circa early Dec 03. Also turns out Centcom claims that they cannot jam these (circa Dec 04),

It does appear that we have a problem here. Toy remotes. Rather sad, would you not say? Coming from the second in command of the Mightiest Super powers’ mightiest command. Beam me up, Scotty.

Now pit against them a “superpower” that has already spent 150 billion of declining currency for sure but buys plenty still. Do not forget to add 450 billion recurring every year. (Hey, it can buy anything but armor). Add another 100 billion on the cards (Jan 04).

But this does not help.

Short of using a neutron or a nuclear bomb (the Americans did use chemical weapons in Fallujah), despite all efforts, what the Americans have been able to achieve is relatively little, if anything at all, even in the best case estimates of the official narrative.

45 days and going on and on and on and on.

Oh, oh, but, but, but we took Baghdad in 21 days.

45 days for 16 sq kms.....

The opposing American army in this case has not been able to actually “take” them out. Never mind control or physically occupying 16 sq kms.



In fact, even a neutron bomb would not be militarily significant. You need to “take” it and keep it and keep on keeping it and keep on and on and on....

And they have not. They will not. They cannot

The limits of raw firepower have been reached and no matter what (2000 pound bombs to container cluster bombs to the new “large Abrams” tank. Oh well, if not a RPG7, a RPG9 or two will do the trick, thank you), the American military objective is no longer possible.

Shoulder-held surface to air weapons limit the role of armored copters. In fact there are several ‘copter graveyards in and around Fallujah. Big ones. Some of them are quite near the tank killing fields. Yes, several hundred armored vehicles resting, not quite in peace but hey...

Close air support is not feasible on account of the proximity of “friendlies”. Savage bombing without limits does not help.

The war in the former Yugoslavia is a case in point. Despite 72 days of non stop bombing, it is now (post facto) a conceded position that the opposing side lost no more than 5-10% of their military hardware. (The loss was political, but that is another story.)

Now consider an entirely different narrative. Of the the land between the two rivers, of your ancestors and my ancestors, of the fountainheads of civilisation, of Sumer, Ur, Mesopotamia, of Lions, of Hummurabi, of Salah al Din Yusuf Ibn Ayyub and much much more.

And yes, a place. Called Fallujah. But, say, about 84 years ago

And now add to the narrative, parts of the present: a unilaterally disarmed opponent (remember the tizzy circa late March 03 about night vision equipment? Night vision? Never mind state of the art SAMs and Kornets. The sanctions? Oh what were they?

Now add 25 million men, women and children – the richest denizens on this planet (Yes the richest. In every sense. As the very inheritors of civilisation itself. Or in a more mundane sense with 300 billion+ barrels of oil, an average Iraqi’s garbage would be reconstructing the streets of Manhattan in a fairer world (the Americans have in contrast 22.5 billion barrels left), and, yes, the bravest. And the most suffering on the face of this planet

Add to that the Story of Fallujah (circa late 2004). Then perhaps you will not be so astonished to hear what appear to be strange words to your ears.

For these are Iraqi words. Yes, Iraqi. Dated 10th of December 2004

“The enemy is on the run. They are in fear of a resistance movement they can not see nor predict. We, now choose when, where, and how to strike. And as our ancestors drew the first sparks of civilization, we will redefine the word ‘conquest’. Today we write a new chapter in the arts of urban warfare”

The Iraqi resistance has put an end to “the end of history”. A new history is being written. Yes indeed it has been written. Not just another chapter but an entirely new book. One may see the the beginning of the great American retreat across the oceans, if they are lucky. Over 50,000 American soldiers have been medically evacuated out of Iraq till Nov. 2004 (interesting number, is it not?).

Yes, there will be a lot lot more lives lost and the endgame’s contours are still unclear.

Oh the last line. Yes the last line addressed specifically to one Mr. George W. Bush:

“You have asked us to ‘Bring it on’, and so have we. Like never expected. Have you another challenge?”

Yes Indeed, has he another challenge? No, he is a trifle busy, you see. We did try a photo-op on the 18th of Dec 2004. We are not fools you see. But no photos.

I wonder why..

Raw unopposed firepower has reached its limits. Never have so few battled against so many in face of overwhelming odds and brought a superpower to its knees. And the nightmare continues.

It is indeed the greatest military victory in history. The self proclaimed mightiest empire that ever was, in fact, turns out to have had the shortest reign ever.

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