

“... The Horrible Truth”

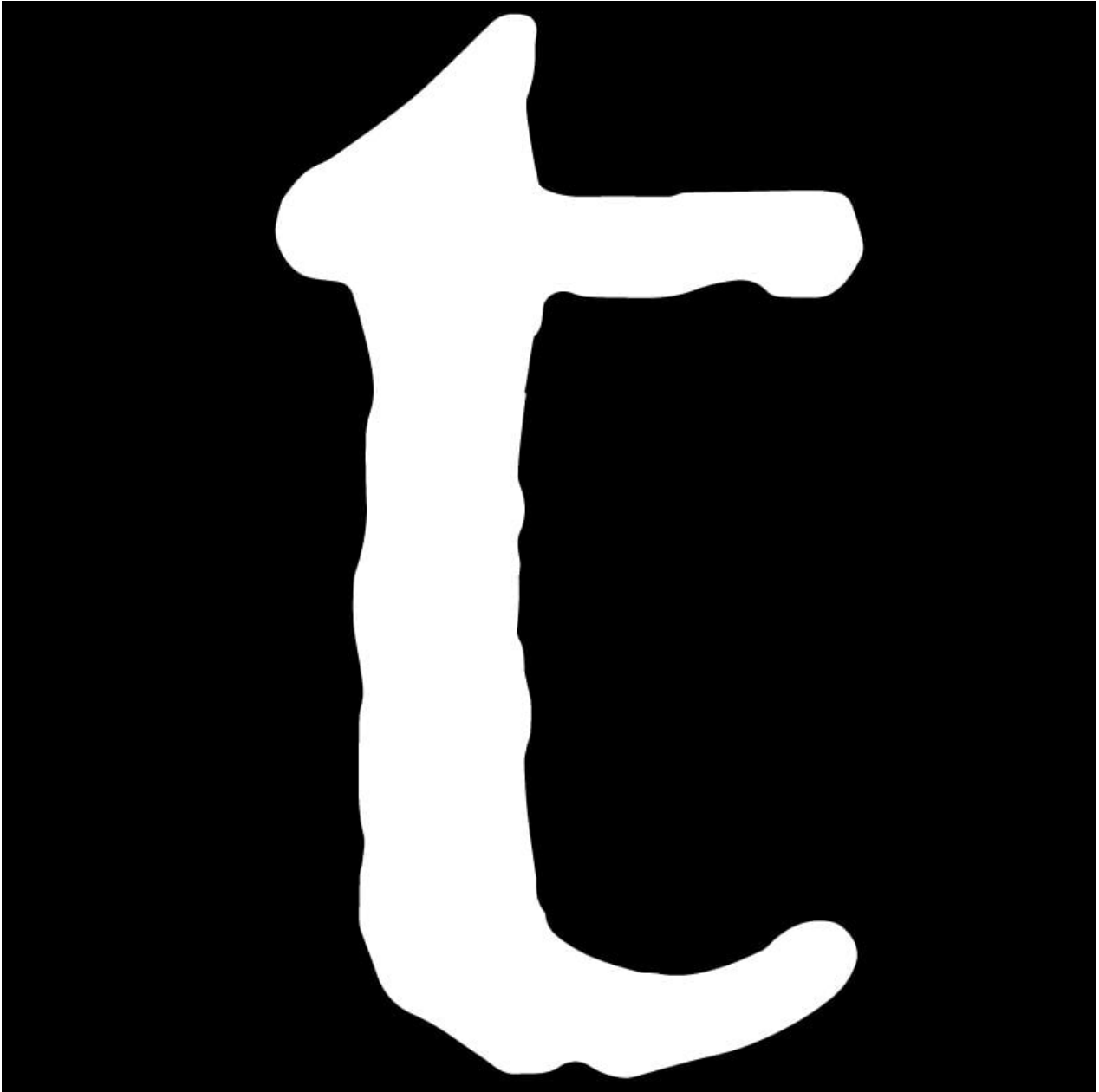
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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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After this morning's suicide attacks, an injured man is treated in a Baghdad hospital. (Photo: Khalid Mohammed / AP)

The US occupation of Iraq, which has become the full responsibility of President Barack Obama, is once again a bloodbath. Not that it had ceased to be violent, brutal and chaotic, for not one day has passed since the US invasion of Iraq was launched that hasn't found several Iraqis being senselessly slaughtered. But rather than talking about three Iraqis being killed today, or two dozen, we are again talking about several dozen, and over 100 wounded, as we are seeing recently. Each of these Iraqis have been killed as a direct result of the US occupation of Iraq - their blood splattered on the hands of President Obama, who, during a visit to Baghdad's airport on April 7, praised the US military for their "extraordinary achievement" in Iraq.

On April 23, over 73 Iraqis were killed in two separate suicide attacks. One bomber detonated his explosives in central Baghdad as a group of policemen were distributing relief supplies to Iraqis who had been driven from their homes during the US-fomented sectarian bloodshed of 2006 to mid-2007. Police said that at least 50 people were wounded; at least

five children and one woman were among the dead.

A second major suicide bombing occurred that day as well, near Muqdadiya, about 50 miles north of Baghdad. The bomber targeted Iranian pilgrims who were in a restaurant, killing at least 45 and wounding over 60. The Shiite pilgrims were visiting Shia religious sites in Iraq.

The bombings reek of al-Qaeda in Iraq – whose operations were brought to a standstill thanks to both the Iraqi resistance and the al-Sahwa (US-created Sunni militia comprised mostly of former resistance fighters, who were largely abandoned by the US military and are now being attacked by the Iraqi government). The Sahwa have been abandoning their security posts in protest at having not been paid by the Iraqi government for their work, as well as in protest of the ongoing targeting of their leaders by the government. Prime Minister Maliki perceives the Sahwa as a political threat to the existence of his government, so has taken it upon himself to undermine their existence at every turn, as he has from the beginning.

The recent spasms of horrendous violence in Iraq are a direct result of the US abandonment of the Sahwa, and the US reluctance to stop Maliki from his ongoing policies to disenfranchise the group. The Sahwa were able to find al-Qaeda when the US military could not. Now that they are ceasing their security operations across an increasing portion of Iraq, naturally, the ability of al-Qaeda to conduct their operations increases.

Meanwhile, we have the pathetic propaganda from the impotent Maliki government in Baghdad. On the same day of the aforementioned bloodletting, just after the second bombing, Iraqi state television announced that Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, the purported leader of the Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaeda-linked group, was captured in eastern Baghdad. Security experts have previously speculated that al-Baghdadi was a character invented by some extremist groups rather than a real person and the US military does not believe there was ever a single al-Qaeda leader with that name.

There will be more attacks like this. They have less to do with the approaching June deadline of US troops to withdraw from cities in Iraq, (aside from Mosul, and any others the US military feels it should not withdraw from), and more to do with the Sahwa being hung out to dry by both the US military and the Iraqi government.

My cynicism is due to the fact that the Maliki government is not ceasing its attacks on the Sahwa, nor is there any indication the US government will force them to do so.

Neither the US military nor the Iraqi military has proven itself capable of finding al-Qaeda, nor of ceasing the attacks. In fact, Agence France-Presse reported on April 22 that the US military is, in fact, continuing to lead 'Iraqi-led' operations. The report reads:

"The [US and Iraqi] troops assembled by torchlight at Camp Falcon for a mission to the farming village of Owessat, which American and Iraq forces believe is being used as a staging ground for bombings in and around the capital. As with nearly every operation in Iraq these days, the Americans insisted that the Iraqis were in charge, leading the fight against Al-Qaeda and other armed groups with US forces cast in a supporting role. But the scene at Camp Falcon told a different story: six years after the invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein, the Americans not only vastly outnumbered the Iraqis, but

they were giving orders and providing vital logistical support. Under a security pact signed in November, Iraqi forces are to assume full responsibility for security as US forces withdraw from cities and towns by June 30 and from the country as a whole by the end of 2011. Iraqi and US leaders and commanders have repeatedly said that Iraq's 560,000 police and 260,000 soldiers will be able to maintain security as the Americans pull back and have vowed to adhere to the timeline of the security plan. But on the Ouessat operation this month, 600 US troops backed by helicopters were joined by a group of 40 Iraqi soldiers who, over the course of the 21-hour raid, repeatedly took their cues from the Americans."

Many Americans who voted for Barack Obama last November continue to believe he will do the right thing in Iraq. The reality is that, unless forced to do so from below, there will be none of the promised "change" in US foreign policy. Those on the receiving end of US policy in the Middle East, Iraq in particular, know this better than most Americans.

In April 2004, when I was in Fallujah during the first major US military assault on that city, I spoke with Maki al-Nazzal, who was managing a small, makeshift emergency clinic. We spoke while dozens of women and children, most shot by US military snipers, were carried into the clinic.

"For all my life, I believed in American democracy," he told me with an exhausted voice. "For 47 years, I had accepted the illusion of Europe and the United States being good for the world, the carriers of democracy and freedom. Now, I see that it took me 47 years to wake up to the horrible truth. They are not here to bring anything like democracy or freedom."

Maki, who is now a refugee in Amman, Jordan, continued, "Now I see it has all been lies. The Americans don't give a damn about democracy or human rights. They are worse than even Saddam."

I asked him if he minded if I quoted him with his name. "What are they going to do to me that they haven't already done here," he replied.

Dahr Jamail, an independent journalist, is the author of "Beyond the Green Zone: Dispatches From an Unembedded Journalist in Occupied Iraq," (Haymarket Books, 2007). Jamail reported from occupied Iraq for eight months as well as from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Turkey over the last four years

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