

Who are the War Criminals? The Nightmare: The Iraq Invasion's Atrocities, Unearthing the Unthinkable

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March 19 2022 marks 19 years since the US-UK led war on Iraq in 2003. But that war did not start in 2003. It is an ongoing 31 years wars. It is part of a broader war against humanity.

This article by Felicity Arbuthnot was first published on October 9, 2010. Felicity was for several years a war correspondent in Iraq.

"Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities." François-Marie Arouet -"Voltaire" (1694-1778.)



I have a deeply held belief that the duty of a commentator is, to the best of one's ability, to record, to shine light in often dark places, to act as a voice for those whose own voice, fears, plights might not be heard or known. To write about the emotions one sometimes feels when doing it, is an anathema and anyway a redundancy.

The purpose is to attempt to draw attention to wrongs, not to whinge about the effects they can have - and any way, a private life should be just that. If politicians wish to strip themselves of their dignity and allude to everything from their sex life, to using private grief to gain sympathy votes, those with a shred of self-respect do not wish to emulate them. Here, I am breaking my taboo, for a reason.

Over the last several weeks I have again researched in depth, invasion's atrocities in Iraq, unearthing the unthinkable, switching off emotion and reading of terror, torture, monstrous wickednesses, word after sickening word. Then, Fallujah revisited (1) with document after document revealing the depth of the darkest depravities towards others, which can be plumbed, by "some mother's son" - or daughter. Indeed, some child's father or mother, able to shoot the children, toddlers, babies of others, in cold blood, drive over them in tanks, leaving the pathetic remains to be eaten by stray dogs.





Photographs viewed have included many which even hardened investigators have deemed: "too disturbing to view." This is not a view I hold.

If family members who have survived, emergency workers (when not incinerated by U.S., troops themselves) medical staff, if not shot, imprisoned, tortured, or tied up with a bag over their head) can view, identify, bury with love and respect - or in the case of medical staff, carefully photograph, and note time, location of finding, then number, wrap and retain for a period, before burial, hoping a relative will claim the charred, mutilated, or worse, remains. It is a duty for those with any "voice", from countries responsible for this first documentable U.S., U.K., genocide of the 21st century, to draw attention to it, in the memory of and in tribute to, the voiceless, nameless, uncounted victims, in the hope that eventually, legal recourse might result.

In fact it was compassion which over came all - bodies and faces burned near beyond recognition, or the eviscerated, the all with the eyes, often, still staring out in a desperate silent plea for help, combined with utter bewilderment. "We have the scumbags on the run", wrote a marine on his website. "We lit them up", wrote another, as many took photographs of these lost souls - and sent them to porn sites in exchange for free viewing. And between the U.S., occupiers (now, surreally, re-branded "advisors" - same car, new paint) and what Hussein al-Alak of the Iraq Solidarity Campaign has called: " the U.S., imposed Vichy government, with their foreign passports ..", who will fight for justice for the Iraqis?

And, as since 1991, this is also a war against the unborn, new born and under fives. After the bodies and the rubble, the gore, blood and limbs, there are the deformities. The fledgling life, born without eyes, brain, with one cyclops eye, with no head, with two heads, with no limbs, or fingers - or too many.

A biblical land turned to genetic and ecological Armageddon, for current and future generations, till the end of time. "Mission accomplished", said George W. Bush, in his ridiculous little flying suit, on the USS Abraham Lincoln on 1st May 2003. "Let freedom reign", he scribbled, after the first, corrupt, murderous, corpse-littered "elections". Result: "Let genocide commence."



The U.S., appointed "Viceroy" in Iraq, J. Paul Bremer, dressed for the part, Hollywood style, in ridiculous desert, or army boots, depending on your perception, arrived shortly after the invasion, seemingly believing in population reduction. Reportedly asking what the population of Iraq was, he was told, about twenty five million. His response was allegedly : "Too many, try five." But then, he had been Kissinger Associates' man.

As I read, I listened to the great and the good in various world legal bodies discuss whether the Congo and Rwanda should be "classed" as genocide. In July 2004, as U.S., troops were training for the Fallujah massacre, the coming November, the U.S., House of Representatives passed a unanimous resolution calling the tragedy of Darfur: "Genocide." They asked the administration to consider "Multilateral or even Unilateral" action, to end this genocide. Reluctance to take proactive steps to prevent further loss of human life was "criminal", they opined.

Seemingly genocides these days are only committed by Africans or Eastern Europeans, not those great bastions of democracy, U.S., U.K., and the "only democracy in the Middle East", ally Israel. The Israeli Defence Force, trained U.S., troops for the two week November 2004, Fallujah pogrom. (2) "If it moves, shoot it", was the order of the day. As two world wars, as Korea, Vietnam, the face of liberation never changes.

"Their tactics basically involve massive fire power ... bringing in tanks and helicopters to fire on targets ... demolishing buildings, establishing snipers on roofs, smashing holes in walls (and) shooting anything that moved." This in addition to: " ... aerial bombardment and shell fire from large field guns."

The plight of Fallujah:

"Was not fully understood in the West, save by some of the survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto ... they were trapped (like) rabbits in a cornfield", being circled to be mown down and dismembered by combine harvesters.(3)

The photographs are testimony to the chilling description. The unsung heroes are those who determined to record them, so some time, some where, the crimes would be known and legal retribution sought. These terrible, pathetic images, are the silent testimony to the first known Western genocide of the 21st century. Sadly, it is a near certainty that Iraq and Afghanistan will, in time, produce proof of more.

On visits to Iraq during the embargo years, when there was the silent genocide over nearly

thirteen years of the U.S.-U.K.,- driven U.N., embargo's prohibition of all necessary to sustain the basics of life, with children dying of "embargo-related causes", at an average of six thousand a month, witnessing the heartbreak, the bafflement at their plight, the terrible guilt was always leaving. One saw and shared to some extent, the unimaginable, being perpetrated in one's name, then one left. Across the border, in Jordan, the lights were on, the towns bustled, clean water came out of the taps, and the illegal American and British bombs were not dropping. Yet so near, the children were dying, the people were dying, in the name of "We the people ..."

Looking through the photographs, reading of the near incomprehensible depths of sadistic destruction of their fellow human beings, men and women in uniform can uniformly sink to, I could also escape at the end of the day. I could make a meal, go and listen to live jazz at a favorite jazz pub, or simply pour a glass of wine and listen to music, surrounded by numerous books, collected pictures and loved items, in a home I enjoy, before seeking the warmth of the duvet and a comfortable bed.

But if the conscious mind can switch off, clearly the sub-conscious does not. One night the nightmare, one was sure was not a nightmare, but reality, struck. In the surreal world of nightmares, I "woke", to find myself saturated, blood pouring from under my arms. Wondering what was happening and what to do about it, I did, in nightmare-land, what I often do when working something out (though not usually at 3 a.m.,) and got the tools together and went out in to my garden. As ever, to trim and nurture plants, and bushes, mostly grown from tiny, often quarter inch cuttings, cosseted indoors, until clement weather, then planted outside, in sheltered warmth, and further fed and tended until suddenly seemingly overnight, a vibrant, colored addition, standing on its own roots, is ready to face all seasons. But my garden, with its protective hedges, (white flowers in summer, orange berries in winter and thorns to deter the trespasser ...) had gone. There were just bulldozer tracks, deep, ruining, not a leaf, stem or bloom left - just a wasteland.

Then, in nightmare-world, in my nightclothes, blood covered, I realised I had no keys to get back in. What if anyone found me in this state? I turned to the front door to try and figure a plan - but the building had gone. I was alone, bloody, near undressed and all had vanished, turning back to other familiar buildings, suddenly there was nothing. Just ruin, rubble and wasteland, as far as the eye could see. My life, my books, my comfort zone, were no more. Just the bloodied clothes I stood in remained.

Like walking away, I, of course, woke up - soaked and shivering. To a hot bath, a washing machine and a warm airing cupboard full of clean bed linen - my garden still intact. The people of Iraq, with their destroyed homes and gardens, fruit groves, date palm groves, or their vibrant plantings on balconies or flat roofs; the Palestinians, suffering the same plight for sixty two interminable years, and the people of Afghanistan in their flattened compounds, destroyed with their scented groves and gardens of blossoms and apricots, live a nightmare from which they never awake.

I thought again of the Iraqi child, whose parents had a beautiful garden, who showed a friend and I her drawing book, before the invasion. One picture had an abundance of flowers, carefully colored, in numerous hues, on the side were American soldiers - shooting at the flowers. "Why are the soldiers shooting the flowers?" We asked. "Because Americans hate flowers", she replied solemnly. It was a deeply saddening moment, that she represented so many children, who saw American as representing only wrath, fear and deprivation. She knew nothing of those Americans who had worked tirelessly to reverse the

situation. If she has survived, she will be a young adult. She is unlikely to have changed her views.

In the U.K., Scottish parliamentarian, Dr Bill Wilson (4) is ploughing a determined path to bring Tony Blair to justice. In furtherance of this, he has now written to Scottish First Minister, Alex Salmond and Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Kenny MacAskill, calling for Scotland to adopt the recently agreed international definition of the crime of aggression into its legislature. His letter reads:

“The International Criminal Court’s Review Conference of the Rome Statute in Kampala (5) earlier this year adopted a resolution by which it amended the Statute so as to include a definition of the crime of aggression and the conditions under which the Court could exercise jurisdiction with respect to the crime. The actual exercise of jurisdiction is subject to a decision to be taken after 1 January 2017 by the same majority of States Parties as is required for the adoption of an amendment to the Statute. However, I believe that there is now no legal obstacle to individual countries adopting the new definition of the crime of aggression into their own legislatures. I hope you will agree with me that it would be to Scotland’s credit if we could be one of the first countries to do this, and it would be a fine legacy for the present Scottish Government to leave as it nears the end of its term.”

He commented that, further, since the The International Criminal Court has now agreed on a definition of the crime of aggression: “I believe that although the ICC itself cannot prosecute on the basis of this for the time being, there is no impediment to individual countries adopting the definition into their own legislatures immediately. If Scotland did so, it would be an excellent example to the rest of the world and would send the clear message that we respect international law here. It would also create a powerful incentive for present and future UK Governments to think carefully before embarking on warfare.

“I think most Scots would not wish to see a repeat of the tragedy we have seen unfold in Iraq. This might be a way of preventing such misguided ventures in the future.” Dr Wilson, is adamant: Scotland is in a position to: “... lead ethically in adopting the crime of aggression definition”, and has legal advice which concurs. Dr Wilson plans to use Fallujah as an example of this aggression, but also points out there there are surely numerous others, undocumented, as yet.

As John Pilger reminds, Blair promised that the (illegal) invasion of Baghdad would be “ ... without a bloodbath and that Iraqis in the end would be celebrating ... In fact, the criminal conquest of Iraq smashed a society, killing up to a million people, driving four million from their homes, contaminating cities such as Fallujah with cancer-causing poisons and leaving a majority of young children malnourished in a country once described by Unicef as a ‘model.’ ” (New Statesman, 30th September, 2010.)

As Pakistan, Iran, Yemen, Somalia, now seem to be in would be imperial sights, a precedent which will flag a up a warning sign to leaders of ill intent, is surely needed. Dr Gideon Polya, who’s work on excess deaths from invasions since 1950, states, in Afghanistan: “The annual death rate is 7% for under-5 year old Occupied Afghan infants, as compared to 4% for Poles in Nazi-occupied Poland, and 5% for French Jews in Nazi-occupied France.”

The U.S., and U.K., whose leaders have trumpeted the dangers of the latest “new Hitler” in the countries they planned to decimate, have outdone the Nazis. Enough.

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Notes

1. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=212121>

See also : www.billwilsonmsp.org

2. "War Crime or Just War", Nicholas Wood, South Hill Press, 2005.

3. See 2.

4. See 1.

5. <http://www2.icc-cpi.int/menus/icc/press%20and%20media/press%20releases/review%20conference%20of%20the%20rome%20statute%20concludes%20in%20kampala>

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