

Walls of Apartheid: Ghettoizing Baghdad

By [Felicity Arbuthnot](#)

Global Research, April 25, 2007
25 April 2007

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

The world has seen America's little President declaring 'Mission accomplished' staged on a warship, geared up in a dinky flying suit (which did some strange things to his lower organs) 'milestones', the 'surge' and now the ghettoization of Baghdad. As the Nazis in Warsaw, the US in Vietnam, the Israelis in Palestine. America also plans a wall between itself and Mexico and Iraq and Saudi Arabia, reportedly to be built by the Israeli company, Zeef Belinsky, who have pioneered the new Berlin Wall between Israel and Palestine. Falluja of course was the first US experiment at 'gating' and having 'gated' this ancient city, they slaughtered the encircled with impunity. The Baghdad plan is reportedly the newest brainchild of former CIA darling Ahmed Chalabi (www.uruknet.info?p=32367) the man who also told the US administration that the invaders would be greeted with sweets and flowers.

Baghdad's turbulent history has dealt it many tragedies and mischiefs, but it has been Mesopotamia's heart since its founding in 762, after Caliph Abu al Mansur slept at the site of this former Persian village and declared that he had spent 'the sweetest, gentlest night on earth' there 'and decided to build a great city, laying the first brick himself "in the name of God" '.It became known as Dar Es Salaam - City of Peace. It has survived twenty one bloody invasions. Each time it has rebuilt itself and the people have started their lives over again.

But never has it been ghettoized. It has taken the residents of a fledgling country and history to built blast walls, encase, enclose and rape this city which, when celebrated in song and poetry, is frequently compared to a beautiful woman. Wondrous sculptures and monuments which dotted its streets and squares have been erased, even that of Mansur himself . Is Mohammed Ghani's flying carpet still there, soaring skyward, based on One Thousand and One Nights? Sheherazade and the haunting, shimmering Ali Baba statue, depicting the thieves getting their come-uppance in boiling oil - but the dispenser of the oil is a woman as glorious as pre-invasion Baghdad itself, standing atop the forty urns - and the oil is a superb, sparkling fountain, which cascaded, constantly, in glistening perfection.

Mohammed Ghani, creator of these and many wonders is the first Muslim sculptor to be commissioned by the Vatican. He made two huge doors depicting the stations of the cross for the largest Catholic church in Baghdad. He was working on them during the 1991 Gulf war, when the electricity was bombed. When it got dark, he used to take them outside his studio and in to the street and everyone in the neighborhood came and held candles and lamps for him to work by: 'I tell people that we are not just a country of tents and camels. We have a civilization that goes back thousands of years. Culture is in our blood, in our veins.' Ghani's works are also on display in Rome, Paris, Sicily and Lebanon.

'Iraqis need to move away from zero sum thinking', said the mortifyingly patronizing new US Ambassador, Ryan Crocker on April 23rd., cowering in the Green Zone, which Iraqis have

renamed 'The Texas Bubble.' (Oil, Bush, Texas, get it?) Perhaps Crocker should pay a visit to Mohammed Ghani's studio, where Beethoven, Chopin and Mozart play as creation is born. If the invasion has not killed him, Baghdad's 'exuberant sculptor.' Ghani would remind Crocker that for the first five centuries of its existence, it was the most famous place of learning in the world, with books translated from Chinese, Indian, Greek and Latin and where scholars from afar studied at the Bayt al Hikma (House of Wisdom.) The first paper arrived in Iraq in the eighth century, probably from China and shortly afterwards a paper mill was established. Iraqis need no lessons on how to think.

'The width of the Tigris in Baghdad is about four hundred yards, a noble stream. It is ..the sweet, fresh thoroughfare of the town - not clear water, but lion colored Its broad flowing surface is dyed by the same earth of which the houses and minarets on its banks are built, so that all is one, in tawny harmony. Its low winter mists in the early morning ... its many craft, evolved through centuries ... all this, a perpetual joy.' (Freya Stark, Baghdad Sketches, 1932.)* Now this 'perpetual joy', this historic jewel in humanity's history, wreckers are to destroy to ghettoize maybe thirty districts, according to Brigadier General John Campbell, who says: 'barrier walls will outline selected neighborhoods around Baghdad in an attempt to help protect the Iraqi population from terrorists.' Crocker adds the lie that 'terrorists' have stalked Iraq 'for at least four decades.' Unless anyone messed with the regime, it was a place of remarkable safety. 'Terrorism' came in on and in the wake of one of the stupidest and most criminal invasions in history. Incidentally, early in the invasion, US tanks had writing on them declaring the troops conquerors and kings of the 'tigress'. They could not even spell this Biblical 'noble stream'. 'He builds palaces, whilst his people starve', was a broken record bleat of the US and UK government, as they hijacked the United Nations and starved Iraq under the thirteen year (1990-2003) embargo. (The UN, in fact recorded that free monthly food distribution on a crippled budget, since Iraq could not trade, was the most efficient they had ever witnessed.) Now the invaders squat illegally, in those very palaces and vandals from the 407th Brigade Support Battalion of the 82nd Airborne, build walls, whilst an average of one hundred people a day die violently under their watch, unemployment is perhaps seventy percent and more die than even under the embargo, not alone of the violence but in hospitals starved of equipment and medications by the 'liberators'.

That it is incumbent for each leader to leave something more magnificent than the previous one, is a belief followed since the Caliphs. It says all that the legacy of Iraq's current puppet, quisling government, it seems, will be destruction, death - and hideous barrier walls. Lady Baghdad has become a pearl cast before swine. Time, however would seem to be running out for this US/UK folly, as their troops die in ever greater numbers. Baghdad's streets are up in arms and if anything will unite its residents as before the invasion, it is the opposition to the gated ghettos. Further, a massive demonstration last week, mostly missed by the western media, saw Iraqis carrying coffins. On them were written 'the security surge' and 'the Maliki government'. The last (British) imposed Prime Minister was, ironically, like Maliki, called Nuri. He came to a very unpleasant end. History repeats itself uncannily in Iraq.

*Historic details: Van der Gaag and Arbuthnot, 'Great Cities: Baghdad' World Almanac Books 2006. Mohammed Ghani: authors' interviews.

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Felicity Arbuthnot](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca