

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نښاد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.fff.org/comment/com1011h.asp>

Blood on His Hands

Sheldon Richman

November 15, 2010

As George W. Bush hawks his memoir, *Decision Points*, he seems especially driven to justify his decision to invade and occupy Iraq. He emphasizes how sickened he was at learning that Saddam Hussein had no weapons of mass destruction, though not too sick to kid about it at the White House correspondents' dinner. While he refuses to say whether he would have ordered the invasion had he known the truth — and there's good reason to suspect that he did know the truth — Bush insists that 25 million Iraqis are better off without Saddam in power.

Unfortunately, the deferential interviewers are unwilling to ask tough questions. (Why do former presidents, secretaries of state, and their ilk get this free pass?) One need not have been a fan of Saddam to see that the invasion/occupation has been a catastrophe for the Iraqi people. Large numbers of them are not better off because of Bush's illegal actions — millions are either dead, victims of torture, or refugees. After analyzing various studies and methods of estimating war deaths, John Tirman, executive director of MIT's Center for International Studies, concludes, "The evidence, then, is rather clear and compelling. Something like 700,000 or more Iraqis have been killed either through direct or 'structural' violence in the period since the U.S. invaded more than seven years ago. The number could easily be as high as a million. Most were killed by other Iraqis, or the deplorable conditions that wars wreak and persist in Iraq."

Are those people better off, Mr. President? How about the three million driven from their homes?

But, Bush apologists will counter, Tirman says, “Most were killed by other Iraqis.” Doesn’t that get Bush off the hook? Not by a long shot.

The recent WikiLeaks revelations document that American forces were ordered not to investigate Iraqi-on-Iraqi killings and torture. Moreover, U.S. troops turned prisoners over to the Iraqis knowing that they would be tortured. But it’s even worse than that.

“[The] deeper significance of the order, which has been missed by the news media, is that it was part of a larger U.S. strategy of exploiting Shi’a sectarian hatred against Sunnis to help suppress the Sunni insurgency when Sunnis had rejected the U.S. war,” writes Gareth Porter of the Inter Press News Service, a reporter with extensive knowledge of the conflict. “The strategy [developed by Gen. David Petraeus] involved the deliberate deployment of Shi’a and Kurdish police commandos in areas of Sunni insurgency in the full knowledge that they were torturing Sunni detainees, as the reports released by WikiLeaks show.”

The U.S. government was only doing what it used to do in Latin America: train and equip death squads to eradicate undesirables. This was the period when Sunni resistance to the U.S. occupation and sectarian violence were at their height. Every day large number of tortured bodies were found on Baghdad streets as vengeful Shi’a Muslims, backed by America and Iran, engaged in sectarian cleansing of the city. Porter elaborates that the Bush-Cheney-Petraeus strategy was “a major contributing factor to the rise of al-Qaeda’s influence in the Sunni areas. The escalating Sunni-Shi’a violence it produced led to the massive sectarian warfare of 2006 in Baghdad in which tens of thousands of civilians — mainly Sunnis — were killed.”

As Porter recounts events, two years earlier the Civil Defense Corps in Sunni areas of Iraq “essentially disappeared overnight during an insurgent offensive” and the U.S. command turned to Shi’a and Kurdish police and military units to put down the resistance. Soon the U.S. order not to intervene in the abuse of prisoners was issued. “It was a clear signal that the U.S. command expected torture of prisoners to be a central feature of Iraqi military and police operations against Sunni insurgents,” Porter writes. From there the American force established and trained sectarian paramilitary squads for the dirty work, the first being the Wolf Brigade. “It did not take long for the Wolf Brigade to acquire its reputation for torture of Sunni detainees,” Porter writes.

Are we to believe “the decider” — the man who boasts of approving torture for American prisoners — was unaware of that U.S./Iran-supported bloodletting? Bush has disgraced the country, but don’t expect him to be asked to account for himself.