

On September 11th, I sat in numb horror as the images of carnage unfolded before me on the television. On that day, I was the victim of terrorism, along with every other American. Today, I sit in numbed horror as more carnage unfolds. Hundreds of massive missiles have rained down on a city far away, killing indiscriminately among the young, the infirm, the old and the innocent. My government did this. My nation did this. My leaders did this. Today, I am the terrorist. So are you.

Now, I Am the Terrorist

by William Rivers Pitt

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The city of Baghdad, founded in 762 A.D. under the name Madinat as-Salam -- 'City of Peace' -- is this day a lake of fire. The opening stage of the Bush administration's "Shock and Awe" attack plan began as night fell on Iraq, and lived terribly up to its terrible name. *CBS news* is reporting that great swaths of residential neighborhoods within Baghdad have been engulfed in flames. One can trust, perhaps, the ability of a cruise missile to hit a bullseye from many miles away. One cannot be so precise in predicting which way the resulting fires will blow.

In the great earthquake in San Francisco in 1906, people were not killed so much by the shaking. They were killed by the firestorm that sucked the air from their lungs and reduced them to ash before they could flee. So it seems to be today in Baghdad.

Baghdad is a city of 5 million people, half of whom are under the age of fifteen, most of whom are too poor to flee. Now, a great many of those people are dead, burned in their homes and on their streets.

The American television media provided all of us with a Dresden-eye view of the attack. Huge mushroom clouds bloomed from the streets as buildings blazed and fell. The thunder of the explosions was so loud that television speakers became distorted with the sound of the concussion. The sky lit up as though the sun was rising. It was a fitting image, for a new day in world history has dawned.

Much has been made of the precision of our vaunted arsenal of bombs and missiles, as if they can go into a building and find the second door on the left before they explode. The truth is far more dire. When a B-2 bomber drops a 2,000 lb. JDAM munition, everyone and everything within a 120 meter radius is instantly killed. Anyone within a 365 meter radius risks severe shrapnel wounds. To be totally safe, one must be 1,000 meters away from the epicenter of the explosion. Imagine how many homes can fit into 1,000 meters, and never mind the firestorm.

American Marines have died securing petroleum facilities, and in a helicopter crash. If Iraqi forces do not surrender soon, American forces will attack Baghdad from the ground. The loss of life among our people will grow exponentially if a Stalingrad-style fight unfolds in Baghdad and Tikrit. On Tom Brokaw's *CBS News* broadcast, the father of one of the soldiers killed in the helicopter crash held a picture of his son to the camera and shouted, "Take a look, Bush. You killed my only son."

Those who stand against this attack are dunned as "Not supporting the troops." One might suggest the best way to support troops is to see them brought home safely. One might also suggest that support continues after the shooting stops. This does not appear to be on the agenda for the Republican Party. A vote along party lines today in the House Budget Committee slashed \$9.7 billion from veterans disability compensation programs, as well as from other programs. These cuts, pushed through the committee by the majority-holding Republicans, are part of the plan to see Bush's new \$1.57 trillion tax cut through. Wave that flag, George.

Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld, when asked by a reporter whether the Iraqi people would cheer Americans after this attack, stated that Baghdad's civilians would welcome us. This defies known history in Japan and Germany and Vietnam; those populations, after absorbing saturation bombing, hardened their resistance. American television purported to show Iraqi civilians cheering a soldier who tore down a picture of Hussein, but a *Sky News* reporter walking Baghdad's streets reported that, to a man, everyone he spoke with spat hatred and derision for this American attack.

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There is no justification for this attack. Saddam Hussein and his forces had been effectively disarmed by the first Gulf War, by the UNSCOM inspections, and by the more recent UNMOVIC inspections. According to Hussein Kamel, son-in-law to Saddam Hussein whose comments to the UN in 1991 were recently reported in a buried *Newsweek* story, Iraq was pretty much disarmed of mass destruction weapons even before the first war. The Bush administration, in pushing for this war, has foisted lie after lie after lie upon the American people and the world. The world didn't buy it, but they weren't dependent upon lapdog

media sources like ours for their data.

We are the terrorists now, stupid underinformed terrorists who dance to the tune of a corporate media machine that will profit wildly from this attack. *NBC*, *MSNBC* and *CNBC* are owned by General Electric, one of the largest defense contractors on earth. They will be paid handsomely in military contracts because of this, as they always have been. Yet GE gives us the news we need to understand what is happening.

Americans are not often afforded the opportunity to witness a war crime live on television. Today's actions bring to mind a war crime from a generation ago: The shooting of a prisoner by Vietnamese General and American ally Nguyen Ngoc Loan. General Loan put a pistol to the head of this bound prisoner and blew his brains into the street, an image that millions of Americans saw after it had taken place. We are here again today. The poverty of the Iraqi people leaves them bound, unable to escape the wave of steel. We have blown their brains out. We have incinerated them in place. We will continue to do so, and you can watch it from your couch. Today, you are the terrorist.

So am I.

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