

# NON-STANDARD ISSUE

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## Stop the Bleeding – End Their Occupation of Iraq

CANDIL OP-ED

By Dr. Arthur Clark & Dr. David Swann

Iraqi Freedom," "good versus evil," or even "us versus them" are versions of the ideology that promoted the catastrophe in the first place. If we are to leave anything worthwhile in Iraq or sustain any hope for a world order based on international law, it is time to abandon these exhortations to violence.

To stop the bleeding it is urgent that we abandon self-righteousness, and adopt instead a principled and pragmatic approach within the framework of international law. For their part, all the key Iraqi stakeholders, independent of influence from the current occupation and its governing structures, must establish and implement a process of reconciliation and governance for Iraq's future. This is essential both to regain stability in Iraq and to address international concerns that civil war will escalate if occupying military forces are withdrawn.

The US and the UK cannot bring peace or security to Iraq. Trust is gone. They are seen as enemy occupiers. There has been too much violation of people for too long. An entire generation of Iraqi youth have come of age under siege from the US, the UK, and a corrupted United Nations Security Council. One of the most advanced public health systems in the Middle East was destroyed by the Gulf War of 1991, its water and sanitation systems targeted by the countries which now occupy Iraq. In 1998, the US renewed bombing in the No-fly zones, terrorizing people and destroying property. For more than a decade economic sanctions were used to strangle the Iraqi economy and create the conditions for regime change. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children perished during the decade of the

There is a danger in these dark times of oversimplifying the terrible complexity of the crisis in Iraq. Interpretations such as a "clash of civilizations," a "war on terrorism," "Operation

sanctions. Millions survived with physical and psychological damage, their hope for the future ravaged.

For many, that experience has engendered hatred for the United States, and it would be astonishing if it hadn't. The US intention of controlling Iraq's oil is well understood by the youth of Iraq. In 2003 the devastation of Iraq was escalated under false pretense that Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction and supporting terrorism. The invasion and occupation caused further massive destruction and terrorization of the Iraqi people, with casualties now placed at well over 10,000 by Occupation Watch. Widespread poverty caused by the economic sanctions, and the collapse of internal security caused by the invasion and occupation, have produced suffering and outrage in the Iraqi population. The proxy administration in Baghdad and the reconfiguration of Iraq's economy and service sectors by the occupying authority, have little credibility among Iraqis.

The US government (importantly distinguished from the American people) is seen in Iraq, as elsewhere in the Middle East, as a corrupt and covetous empire – an enemy of the people of Iraq and of Islam. The very presence of the US in Iraq is a provocative reminder of the Israeli occupation in Palestine, and of US complicity in that oppression.

A decade of violence and economic sanctions, and the more recent invasion and occupation of Iraq, represent fundamental violations of international law. As Canadians we have the opportunity and resources to influence history. As citizens we have a responsibility to bring our government's policies and practice into

compliance with international law. Canadian citizens currently working at CANDIL, with thousands of other Canadian citizens, have for years advised the Canadian government to end the siege of Iraq and use the framework of law to address Iraq's own violations. For over a decade the Canadian government refused to follow our advice, and thereby contributed to the devastation of Iraq and the current crisis. At last in

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### CANDIL

**Documentary Night**  
We will be showing the documentary "War Photographer" by Christian Frei. The film is about the American photographer James Nachtwey about his motivation, his fears and his daily routine as a war photographer.

When: Friday June 25 at 7:00 pm

Where:  
Parkdale United Church  
2917 - 8th Avenue N.W.

#### NEXT ISSUE

Due to the recent increase in violence in Iraq, we at CANDIL thought that it was important to do an issue on the situation. Therefore, our next issue will be on Colombia.

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**Number of civilian deaths in Iraq as of May 5, 2004: around 10,000.**

**Number of military deaths in Iraq as of May 5, 2004: exactly 867.**

**Cost of war in Iraq for the US as of May 5, 2004: around \$112,000,000,000**

**WHAT WE BELIEVE**

CANDIL promotes global human security through a culture of peace, active democracy and respect for international law. Our vision is global; our strategy is local.

**PRINCIPLES**

**Necessity of International Law for Global Peace and Security**

International law is essential for global peace and security, including the peace and security of Canadians. As citizens of Canada, we are expected to obey the law; we expect the same standard of behavior from our government. The government of Canada, and all Canadian political parties, must comply with the fundamental requirements, principles, and purposes of international law, and give international law decisive weight in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

**Lessons from Iraq**

Western policy toward Iraq has contributed to a humanitarian and human rights disaster in that country, and has violated international law, including the law of the UN Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. The errors and violations of our Iraq policy must be made explicit and used as lessons for constructive change in the direction of Canada's foreign policy, to avoid similarly destructive and costly errors in the future, both in Iraq and in other parts of the world.

**Democracy and Responsible Citizenship**

A critical, informed, active citizenry is a fundamental requirement of democracy. Citizens are ultimately responsible for the public policy of their government. Citizens of Canada are responsible for compliance of Canadian foreign policy with the law of the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law. Familiarity with the basic principles and purposes of international law is an indispensable part of education for responsible citizenship.

**Stop the Bleeding - continued from page 1**

2003, the Canadian government relented, and did not participate directly in the invasion and occupation of Iraq. That decision has been abundantly vindicated by subsequent events.

Contempt for international law – as expressed in violations of law by Iraq, by the United States, and by US allies - is largely responsible for the catastrophe in Iraq. That contempt for international law represents a real and growing threat to our future security. Iraq is the canary in the mineshaft of the twenty-first century. Misinterpretation of what made the canary sick will have lethal consequences for our future.

CANDIL offers the following as working guidelines for ending the occupation of Iraq and beginning to repair the damage inflicted by the lawless violence of state power.

1. All governments that participated in the economic siege of Iraq and the unlawful use of force against Iraq, as well as the United Nations Security Council, must acknowledge their part in the destruction of Iraq and renounce the unlawful use of force and economic warfare.
2. International law is the essential framework for the recovery and reconstruction of Iraq and for global security. An independent international legal advisory body must be established to monitor the process of reconstruction and recovery in Iraq. Its reports and recommendations must carry decisive weight and be made widely accessible to governments and to the public.
3. Sovereignty and self-determination are inalienable rights of the people of Iraq. Foreign governments and international bodies must renounce all efforts to delay, manipulate, or dilute the enjoyment of those rights by the people of Iraq.
4. The resources of Iraq belong to the people of Iraq. Those resources are to be deployed in accord with the Charter for Economic Rights and Duties of States and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. We note with grave concern that the United States and the United Kingdom, currently occupying Iraq, voted against the UN General Assembly Resolution that established the Charter for Economic Rights and Duties of States. Current usurpations of control of Iraqi resources are potentially grave violations of international law.
5. All competent governments and international organizations must play a sustained and effective supportive role in the reconstruction of Iraq.
6. There must be a rapid devolution of power to Iraqi institutions. Those institutions must represent all parts of Iraqi society, without prejudice against previous affiliations with the former government of Iraq, the occupying powers, or others.
7. The various groups, organizations, and leaders of Iraq should establish an explicit process of

reconciliation and governance, and begin implementation of the process without delay. Prior to the Gulf War of 1991, Iraq was a leader for the Arab and Muslim world in the empowerment of women. The pace of that progress needs to be restored in the process of reconstruction in Iraq. Women must play a major role in renewal of civil society.

8. All foreign military forces must be expeditiously withdrawn from Iraq. Security within Iraq must be administered and controlled by Iraqi institutions and police, in accord with international law, without foreign domination or interference.
9. After devolution of full governing authority to Iraq, and at the discretion of the legitimate Iraqi authorities, United Nations or other international peacekeeping forces may have a legitimate and useful role to play in maintaining peace and security in Iraq.
10. Regional governments including the government of Iraq should conclude and implement regional agreements on non-aggression, disarmament, and cooperation.
11. Citizens in all democratic countries, working through organizations of civil society, are responsible for bringing their governments' policies into compliance with international law; and for promoting reconciliation, and cultural and social interactions, with civil society in Iraq.

A "lose-lose-lose" scenario is unfolding in Iraq today – for Iraqis, for the US, and for the world. The US cannot provide leadership in Iraq. Canada has an opportunity to play a constructive role and press for transfer of power to legitimate governance in Iraq. Canada must also press for restoration of legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations so that it can play a constructive role in Iraq's recovery. These challenges must be addressed immediately, forcefully, and relentlessly. ✌

**Get Out Before We Are Thrown Out**

**By John Pilger**

**Antiwar.com  
April 16, 2004**

Four years ago, I traveled the length of Iraq, from the hills where St. Matthew is buried in the Kurdish north to the heartland of Mesopotamia, and Baghdad, and the Shia south. I have seldom felt as safe in any country. Once, in the Edwardian

colonnade of Baghdad's book market, a young man shouted something at me about the hardship his family had been forced to endure under the embargo imposed by America and Britain. What happened next was typical of Iraqis; a passerby calmed the man, putting his arm around his shoulder, while another was quickly at my side. "Forgive him," he said reassuringly. "We do not

connect the people of the west with the actions of their governments. You are welcome.”

At one of the melancholy evening auctions where Iraqis come to sell their most intimate possessions out of urgent need, a woman with two infants watched as their pushchairs went for pennies, and a man who had collected doves since he was 15 came with his last bird and its cage; and yet people said to me: “You are welcome.” Such grace and dignity were often expressed by those Iraqi exiles who loathed Saddam Hussein and opposed both the economic siege and the Anglo-American assault on their homeland; thousands of these anti-Saddamites marched against the war in London last year, to the chagrin of the warmongers, who never understood the dichotomy of their principled stand.

Were I to undertake the same journey in Iraq today, I might not return alive. Foreign terrorists have ensured that. With the most lethal weapons that billions of dollars can buy, and the threats of their cowboy generals and the panic-stricken brutality of their foot soldiers, more than 120,000 of these invaders have ripped up the fabric of a nation that survived the years of Saddam Hussein, just as they oversaw the destruction of its artifacts. They have brought to Iraq a daily, murderous violence which surpasses that of a tyrant who never promised a fake democracy.

Amnesty International reports that US-led forces have “shot Iraqis dead during demonstrations, tortured and ill-treated prisoners, arrested people arbitrarily and held them indefinitely, demolished houses in acts of revenge and collective punishment.”

In Fallujah, US marines, described as “tremendously precise” by their psychopathic spokesman, slaughtered up to 600 people, according to hospital directors. They did it with aircraft and heavy weapons deployed in urban areas, as revenge for the killing of four American mercenaries. Many of the dead of Fallujah were women and children and the elderly. Only the Arab television networks, notably al-Jazeera, have shown the true scale of this crime, while the Anglo-American media continue to channel and amplify the lies of the White House and Downing Street.

“Writing exclusively for the Observer before a make-or-break summit with President George Bush this week,” sang Britain’s former premier liberal newspaper on 11 April, “[Tony Blair] gave full backing to American tactics in Iraq... saying that the government would not flinch from its ‘historic struggle’ despite the efforts of ‘insurgents and terrorists’.”

That this “exclusive” was not presented as parody shows that the propaganda engine that drove the lies of Blair and Bush on weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaeda links for almost two years is still in service. On BBC news bulletins and Newsnight, Blair’s “terrorists” are still currency, a term that is never applied to the principal source and cause of the terrorism, the foreign invaders, who have now killed at least 11,000 civilians,

according to Amnesty and others. The overall figure, including conscripts, may be as high as 55,000.

That a nationalist uprising has been under way in Iraq for more than a year, uniting at least 15 major groups, most of them opposed to the old regime, has been suppressed in a mendacious lexicon invented in Washington and London and reported incessantly, CNN-style. “Remnants” and “tribalists” and “fundamentalists” dominate, while Iraq is denied the legacy of a history in which much of the modern world is rooted. The “first-anniversary story” about a laughable poll claiming that half of all Iraqis felt better off now under the occupation is a case in point. The BBC and the rest swallowed it whole. For the truth, I recommend the courageous daily reporting of Jo Wilding, a British human rights observer in Baghdad.

Even now, as the uprising spreads, there is only cryptic gesturing at the obvious: that this is a war of national liberation and that the enemy is “us.” The pro-invasion Sydney Morning Herald is typical. Having expressed “surprise” at the uniting of Shias and Sunnis, the paper’s Baghdad correspondent recently described “how GI bullies are making enemies of their Iraqi friends” and how he and his driver had been threatened by Americans. “I’ll take you out quick as a flash, motherf\*\*\*er!” a soldier told the reporter. That this was merely a glimpse of the terror and humiliation that Iraqis have to suffer every day in their own country was not made clear; yet this newspaper has published image after unctuous image of mournful American soldiers, inviting sympathy for an invader who has “taken out” thousands of innocent men, women and children.

What we do routinely in the imperial west, wrote Richard Falk, professor of international relations at Princeton, is propagate “through a self-righteous, one-way moral/legal screen positive images of western values and innocence that are threatened, validating a campaign of unrestricted violence.” Thus, western state terrorism is erased, and a tenet of western journalism is to excuse or minimize “our” culpability, however atrocious. Our dead are counted; theirs are not. Our victims are worthy; theirs are not.

This is an old story; there have been many Iraqs, or what Blair calls “historic struggles” waged against “insurgents and terrorists.” Take Kenya in the 1950s. The approved version is still cherished in the west - first popularized in the press, then in fiction and movies; and like Iraq, it is a lie. “The task to which we have set our minds,” declared the governor of Kenya in 1955, “is to civilize a great mass of human beings who are in a very primitive moral and social state.” The slaughter of thousands of nationalists, who were never called nationalists, was British government policy. The myth of the Kenyan uprising was that the Mau Mau brought “demonic terror” to the heroic

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**NON-STANDARD ISSUE**

Non-Standard Issue is a bi-monthly newsletter that expresses alternative views in hopes of broadening the minds of citizens and encouraging them to voice their opinions about democracy, peace, international law and responsible citizenship.

**What you can do to become a more responsible citizen.**

1. **Educate yourself.** Check out alternative news websites and join CANDIL or a similar group.
2. **Contact your MP or MLA** on issues that you feel they should be addressing.
3. **Make your voice heard!** Send your letters, commentaries, etc. to editors.

“Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, signifies in the final sense a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”  
— Dwight D. Eisenhower

Get Out... – continued from page 3

white settlers. In fact, the Mau Mau killed just 32 Europeans, compared with the estimated 10,000 Kenyans killed by the British, who ran concentration camps where the conditions were so harsh that 402 inmates died in just one month. Torture, flogging and abuse of women and children were commonplace. "The special prisons," wrote the imperial historian V.G. Kiernan, "were probably as bad as any similar Nazi or Japanese establishments." None of this was reported. The "demonic terror" was all one way: black against white. The racist message was unmistakable.

It was the same in Vietnam. In 1969, the discovery of the American massacre in the village of My Lai was described on the cover of Newsweek as "An American tragedy," not a Vietnamese one. In fact, there were many massacres like My Lai, and almost none of them was reported at the time.

The real tragedy of soldiers policing a colonial occupation is also suppressed. More than 58,000 American soldiers were killed in Vietnam. The same number, according to a veterans' study, killed themselves on their return home. Dr. Doug Rokke, director of the US army depleted uranium project following the 1991 Gulf invasion, estimates that more than 10,000 American troops have since died as a result, many from contamination illness. When I asked him how many Iraqis had died, he raised his eyes and shook his head. "Solid uranium was used on shells," he said. "Tens of thousands of Iraqis - men, women and children - were contaminated. Right through the 1990s, at international symposiums, I watched Iraqi officials approach their counterparts from the Pentagon and the Ministry of Defense and ask, plead, for help with decontamination. The Iraqis didn't use uranium; it was not their weapon. I watched them put their case, describing the deaths and horrific deformities, and I watched them rebuffed. It was pathetic." During last year's invasion, both American and British forces again used uranium-tipped shells, leaving whole areas so "hot" with radiation that only military survey teams in full protective clothing can approach them. No warning or medical help is given to Iraqi civilians; thousands of children play in these zones. The "coalition" has refused to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to send experts to assess what Rokke describes as "a catastrophe."

When will this catastrophe be properly reported by those meant to keep the record straight? When will the BBC and others investigate the conditions of some 10,000 Iraqis held without charge, many of them tortured, in US concentration camps inside Iraq, and the corralling, with razor wire, of entire Iraqi villages? When will the BBC and others stop referring to "the handover of Iraqi sovereignty" on 30 June, although there will be no such handover? The new regime will be stooges, with each ministry controlled by American officials and with its stooge army and stooge police force run by Americans. A Saddamite law prohibiting trade unions for public sector workers will stay in force. Leading members of Saddam's infamous secret police, the Mukhabarat, will run "state security," directed by the CIA. The US military will have the same "status of forces" agreement that they impose on the host nations of their 750 bases around the world, which in effect leaves them in charge. Iraq will be a US colony, like Haiti. And when will journalists have the professional courage to report the pivotal role that Israel has played in this grand colonial design for the Middle East?

A few weeks ago, Rick Mercier, a young columnist for the Free-Lance Star, a small paper in Virginia, did what no other journalist has done

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this past year. He apologized to his readers for the travesty of the reporting of events leading to the attack on Iraq. "Sorry we let unsubstantiated claims drive our coverage," he wrote. "Sorry we let a band of self-serving Iraqi defectors make fools of us. Sorry we fell for Colin Powell's performance at the United Nations... Maybe we'll do a better job next war."

Well done, Rick Mercier. But listen to the silence of your colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic. No one expects Fox or Wapping or the Daily Telegraph to relent. But what about David Astor's beacon of liberalism, the Observer, which stood against the invasion of Egypt in 1956 and its attendant lies? The Observer not only backed last year's unprovoked, illegal assault on Iraq; it helped create the mendacious atmosphere in which Blair could get away with his crime. The reputation of the Observer, and the fact that it published occasional mitigating material, meant that lies and myths gained legitimacy. A front-page story gave credence to the bogus claim that Iraq was behind the anthrax attacks in the US. And there were those unnamed western "intelligence sources," all those straw men, all those hints, in David Rose's two-page "investigation" headlined "The Iraqi connection," that left readers with the impression that Saddam Hussein might well have had a lot to do with the attacks of 11 September 2001. "There are occasions in history," wrote Rose, "when the use of force is both right and sensible. This is one of them." Tell that to 11,000 dead civilians, Mr. Rose.

It is said that British officers in Iraq now describe the "tactics" of their American comrades as "appalling." No, the very nature of a colonial occupation is appalling, as the families of 13 Iraqis killed by British soldiers, who are taking the British government to court, will agree. If the British military brass understand an inkling of their own colonial past, not least the bloody British retreat from Iraq 83 years ago, they will whisper in the ear of the little Wellington-cum-Palmerston in 10 Downing Street: "Get out now, before we are thrown out." ☞

<p><b>Sarajevo on the Euphrates</b></p> <p><b>An Eyewitness Account From Inside the US Siege of Falluja</b></p>
<p><b>by Dahr Jamail</b></p>
<p><b>The Nation April 12, 2004</b></p>

Falluja, Iraq, a low-rise, mostly Sunni city of about 200,000, has become this war's Sarajevo. I was there on Saturday and Sunday during what was supposed to be a cease-fire. Instead of calm, I found a city under siege from American artillery and snipers.

At one of the city's clinics I saw dozens of freshly wounded women and children, victims of US Marine Corps munitions. Hospital officials report that more than 600 Iraqis have now been killed, most of

them civilians. Two soccer fields in Falluja have been converted to graveyards. I went to Falluja with a small group of international journalists and NGO workers. We traveled in a large bus full of medical supplies; our plan was to unload our cargo, take a look around, then leave with as many wounded as we could take out with us.

When we left Baghdad, the road was desolate and littered with the scorched and smoldering shells of vehicles. At the first US checkpoint, the soldiers said they'd been there for thirty hours straight. They looked

exhausted and scared. After being searched, we continued along bumpy dirt roads, winding our way through parts of Abu Ghraib, steadily but slowly making our way toward besieged Falluja. At one point we passed a supply truck that had been hit and was being looted by people from a nearby village. Men and boys were running from the wreck carrying boxes. A small child yelled at our bus, "We will be mujahedeen until we die!"

At one overpass we rolled by an M-1 tank that resistance fighters had destroyed. Smoke and flames still billowed from its burning guts. Down the road were more fires--the whole thirty kilometers to Falluja was strewn with burned-out fuel tankers, trucks, armored personnel carriers (APCs) and tanks. As we approached Falluja we started running into mujahedeen checkpoints. Seeing our supplies and hearing that we were headed for Falluja, the guerrillas let us pass.

Entering the city we saw a huge cloud from a US bomb. To our horror we realized there was no cease-fire. Falluja itself was virtually empty, aside from groups of mujahedeen fighters positioned on every other street corner, their faces covered by kaffiyehs. Many were armed with Kalashnikov assault rifles; some had rocket propelled grenade launchers. In all, I saw hundreds of Iraqi fighters.

The Marines have occupied the northeastern edge of Falluja, but most of the town is occupied by mujahedeen--both local Sunni as well as Shiite members of Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army who have come in from Baghdad and the south. There seem to be separate groups of Mujahadeen in charge of different parts of Falluja and the various roads in and out. Between the mujahedeen and the Marines' lines is a no man's land.

The streets were empty except for a rare ambulance racing to pick up wounded, or the odd family car, usually laden with wounded. We rolled toward one small clinic behind mujahedeen lines, where we delivered our medical supplies from INTERSOS, an Italian NGO.

The clinic building was small, dirty and packed with wounded Iraqis. The Americans have bombed one hospital, and, numerous sources told us, were sniping at people who attempted to enter and exit the other major medical facility. So there were effectively only two small clinics that were safe to care for the hundreds of wounded. (Along with the one we visited, there is one set up in a mechanic's garage.)

As we unloaded our supplies, in came a stream of wounded women and children. Civilian cars sped up to the clinic and over the curb out front, their drivers desperate to unload their wailing family members.

One woman, shot in the gut, was making rasping, gurgling noises as the doctors worked frantically to extract a bullet and patch the wound. All around were the sounds of muffled moaning. The clinic was running low on crucial supplies. The woman's small son had a bullet wound in the neck; his eyes glazed, he vomited continually as other doctors raced to save his life. The desperate work in the clinic continued, off and on, into the night as more victims arrived. From outside came the sound of occasional mortar explosions and sporadic bursts of gunfire.

After we delivered the aid, three of my friends agreed to ride out on the clinic's remaining ambulance to no man's land to retrieve the wounded. The ambulance--the only one left in this part of town, all the others having been destroyed by the Marines--already had three bullet holes from a US sniper through the front windshield on the driver's side, according to hospital sources. The previous driver was out of action; a US sniper's bullets had grazed his head not long ago, these sources also reported. The clinic staff hoped that having English-speaking Westerners on board would allow the vehicle to retrieve more wounded.

My friends made several trips in and out of no man's land, and even spoke to the Marines. But on the last trip US sharpshooters blew out the vehicle's tires. My friends were forced to retreat, leaving a pregnant woman trapped in her house.

As evening approached, a nearby mosque announced through its loudspeakers that the mujahedeen had completely destroyed a US convoy. Gunfire and jubilation filled the streets. The celebration fell silent when the mosque's prayer calls began.

As it grew dark, we made our way to the home of a local man who offered us shelter. Above us we heard the buzzing sound of slow-moving unmanned aerial surveillance drones circling the sky. Then a plane above us began dropping flares. We ran for the cover of a nearby wall, afraid the plane was dropping cluster bombs. There had been reports of this, and two of the most recent victims who arrived at the clinic were said to have been hit by cluster bombs, which badly burned them.

The next morning we walked back to the clinic, and the mujahedeen in the area were extremely edgy, expecting an invasion anytime. They were taking up positions to fight, running to different streets carrying their Kalashnikovs.

One of my friends who'd done another ambulance run to collect two bodies said that a Marine she encountered had told them to leave, because the military was about to use air support to begin "clearing the city." One of the bodies they brought to the clinic was that of a 55-year-old man shot in the back by a sniper outside his home, while his wife and children huddled wailing inside.

The family could not retrieve his body, for fear of being shot themselves. His stiff corpse was carried into the clinic, flies swarming above it. One of his arms was half-raised by rigor mortis.

We loaded our bus with wounded from the clinic and headed out. Everyone felt a renewed US assault was imminent. Fighter jets roared overhead, circling the outskirts of the city. American bombs continued to fall not far from us, and sporadic gunfire continued.



Protest outside of Abu Ghraib prison where US soldiers tortured Iraqi prisoners.

**Dr. Yarub Al Shiraida**

Dr. Al Shiraida is an Iraqi-Canadian who has dedicated his time to helping those in need. In 1994, he became a board member for Life for Relief and Development (Life) in Michigan. The organisation is a nonprofit group dedicated to alleviating human suffering. It is a global organization which strives to offer humanitarian services including health, education, social and economic services to victims of hunger, natural disasters, wars and other catastrophes. Recently, Life with the aid of Dr. Al Shiraida has been involved in relief work in Iraq during the sanctions and after the latest war. Their work includes food distribution and building of medical clinics. Dr. Al Shiraida is personally involved in supporting a home for children with disabilities. Dr. Al Shiraida is organizing Adopt-a-Town in Iraq. The project raises money in Canadian cities to help rebuild specific towns in Iraq. There are four cities in Canada currently participating. CANDIL members Julie Hrdlicka and Noel Ainsley visited with Dr. Al Shiraida in Baghdad this past December and were in awe at how much wonderful work he and Life were doing. His dedication and perseverance has directly helped many Iraqis begin to rebuild their lives after such devastation.

**Sarejavo on the Euphrates – con't from insert - page 5**

We left the city as part of a long convoy of civilian vehicles loaded with families. On the way, we passed groups of mujahedeen at their posts, among them defiant armed boys as young as 11. Coming from the opposite direction were US military vehicles, leaving huge dust plumes behind them. The new troops seemed to be taking up positions on the outskirts of town. We passed several more smoking shells of vehicles destroyed by the resistance--more fuel tankers, more blasted APCs. ☺

We are now in Baghdad, afraid to walk the streets. The Mahdi Army is rumored to be hunting down journalists. The NGOs are pulling out. Everyone knows the "cease-fire" was a lie. If this is a truce, what does war look like?

**Road Maps  
and Detours****By Bruce Bartlett****Washington Times  
April 21, 2004**

On Monday, the New York Times reported growing numbers of conservatives are turning against President Bush on Iraq. This follows an inarticulate defense of the Iraq operation by him in a press conference

last week and growing attacks on our troops. It is now becoming increasingly clear the basic rationale for the war was not well thought through and that postwar planning was deeply flawed at a minimum. These may result from a basic weakness in this White House's policymaking and decision making process.

I have to say my own feelings on the war parallel those of many others who previously supported the war but now feel deep misgivings. Although I don't often write on foreign policy, I felt I had an obligation to take a stand on Iraq before the war started. In a February 2003 column, I reluctantly supported the war because at the time I thought there was credible evidence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq. With that country ruled by a lunatic dictator with known ties to terrorist groups, I felt President Bush deserved the benefit of the doubt.

Since then, I have been very disturbed by the lack of WMDs. I am not yet convinced Mr. Bush manufactured evidence for their existence as a pretext for war. But I do believe he has fostered a White House culture that contributes to error, by stifling internal debate, a decision making process that seems to short circuit research and analysis, and an obsession with loyalty and secrecy that makes the Nixon White House appear a model of openness and transparency.

In this respect, I have been strongly influenced by Ron Suskind's recent book, "The Price of Loyalty," which was based on interviews with former Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and thousands of internal documents provided by

him. That book paints a picture of an administration in which it appears Mr. Bush often makes key decisions with little if any analysis or discussion among those who are to carry out the decisions.

In short, President Bush often seems to operate like the character from "Alice in Wonderland" who declared, "Sentence first - verdict afterwards." Instead of figuring out why and how things should be done before acting, the White House seems to act first and then create ex post facto rationalizations for that decision in lieu of serious deliberation.

Although I claim no inside knowledge of the national security process in this administration, I do know Mr. Suskind and Mr. O'Neill's characterization of its domestic policy operation rings true. While it is conceivable a completely different process operates in the national security arena, I think that is highly unlikely. Presidents establish a style and tone for their White House staff operations and it operates across the board. Therefore, I have every reason to believe the same weaknesses that exist on the domestic side exist within the national security operation as well.

Contrary to what conspiracy theorists imagine, I don't think President Bush ever ordered up invented facts to justify the Iraq war. Rather, I think there was a great deal of what economists call self-selection bias. Facts that confirmed what Mr. Bush wanted to believe tended to filter up to him, while conflicting facts tended to be sidelined.

This sort of thing happens on every issue in every White House. But in this White House, the system of deliberation, debate, analysis and discussion seems unusually weak. As a consequence, there was no way of leveling the playing field, with the result decisions were made on the basis of biased presentations rather than objective analysis.

In previous administrations, one safety valve has been the press. When participants in the decision making felt the president was not fully taking into account certain facts or views, they would be leaked. At least then there was a chance that they would come to his attention. But in this administration there is very little of that, with loyalty and secrecy being enforced to an amazing degree that appears unprecedented.

Moreover, President Bush is, self-admittedly, not a big consumer of news from outside sources. Consequently, alternate ways of communicating facts and views to him are shut down.

Of course, one cannot know whether a more open and honest debate on Iraq would have led to a different result. But I for one would not have supported the war if I thought its principal justification was the liberation of the Iraqi people, which is what the White House now says was its primary mission. Our military exists to defend the nation, not be the world's policeman. If there is a linkage, President Bush has yet to make it. ☺