

## **I Am Become Death - The Destroyer Of The Worlds**

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*Fallujah will enter history as the place where US imperialism carried out an offense of heinous proportions this November, a monstrous crime far beyond any possible forgiveness. The crimson waters of the Euphrates are now emptying into the Persian Gulf the hopes and aspirations of innocent people whose lives were snuffed out on the orders of a man rewarded for his monumental crimes by his great nation.*

Known as the "city of mosques" for its more than 200 mosques, Fallujah is also known for refusing to add Saddam's name to the call for prayers from its ancient minarets. It is located on the banks of river Euphrates, the largest river in Southwest Asia. The 1700 miles long Euphrates is linked with some of the most important events in olden history.

The city of Ur, found at its mouth, was the birthplace of Abraham. On its banks stood the city of Babylon. In the past, the army of Necho was defeated on its banks by Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus the Younger and Crassus perished after crossing it. Alexander traversed it and continued his journey eastward. Presently, George Bush's forces are crossing and re-crossing it making its waters redder each time with the blood of Fallujah's citizens.

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Fallujah has been laid waste. It has been bombed, re-bombed, its citizens gunned down, its structures devastated by powerful weapons. It is a hell on earth of crushed bodies, shattered buildings and the reek of death. In addition to the artillery and the warplanes dropping 500, 1000, and 2000-pound bombs, 70-ton Abrams Tanks and the murderous AC-130 Spectre gunship that can demolish a whole city block in less than a minute, the Marines had snipers crisscrossing the entire town firing at will at whatever moved outside the buildings. For those inside, the US troops were equipped with thermal sights capable of detecting body heat. Any such detection was eagerly assumed to indicate the presence of "insurgents" inviting a deadly salvo.

No body has an accurate idea of how many Iraqis -- combatants and noncombatants -- have been killed by the thousands of tons of explosives and bullets let loose upon the city. Mortuary teams collecting the dead rotting in the city streets are fighting the wandering dogs that are busy devouring their former masters. The hundreds buried beneath the rubble and debris will be dug out later. A US marine spokesman, Colonel Mike Regner, estimated 1,000 and 2,000 Iraqis dead. The world is awaiting the toll from more reliable sources with a wincing anticipation.

Eyewitnesses report human corpses littering the city's streets, nibbled at by starving canines. Parents have been forced to watch their wounded children die and then bury their bodies in their gardens. An Iraqi journalist, reporting in the city for the BBC and Reuters, said: "I have seen some strange things recently, such as stray dogs snatching bites out of bodies lying on the streets. Meanwhile, people forage in their gardens looking for something to eat. Those that have survived this far are looking gaunt. The opposite is happening to the dead -- left where they fell, they are now bloated and rotting . . ."

Some images that did manage to filter through the layers of American censorship include scenes of the devastated landscape of the city; the bloodied and fly-covered corpses of young Iraqi men lying in the streets or heaped in rows amidst the debris; a headless body; women and children escaping with the few possessions they have left; mortuary teams collecting the dead; and Fallujah infants being treated for horrific injuries in Baghdad hospitals. US general John Sattler declared: "We have liberated the city of Fallujah."

**The assault on Fallujah is a pure and simple Nazi-style collective punishment, not liberation. The city has been razed to the ground because its political, spiritual and tribal leaders, motivated by Iraqi patriotism and opposition to the presence of foreign troops in their country, organized a guerilla resistance to the US invasion.**

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The aim of the US assault is to make Fallujah a model to the rest of Iraq of what will happen to those thinking on similar lines. It is the leading thrust of an orgy of killing intended to crush and drive underground every voice of dissent and ensure that elections this coming January will throw up a weak-willed, pro-US toady regime. The American military is rumored to be planning similar attacks on scores of other Iraqi cities and towns.

Not a single major voice has been raised in the American media against the ongoing destruction of Fallujah. While much of the world recognizes something dreadful has occurred, the US press does not even bat an eyelash over the organized leveling of a city of 300,000 people. In none of the US media commentaries is there a single phrase of unease about the moral, or legal, questions involved in the attack on Fallujah. None have dared say

it in as many words that the American military operation in the city is an unlawful act of aggression in an equally illegal, criminal, aggressive war.

The opposite is true in fact. Ralph Peters, the author of *Beyond Baghdad: Postmodern War and Peace*, a rabid Neocon mouthpiece and revered by the ruling Neocons, in his prominently placed November 4 *New York Post* article wrote:

"We need to demonstrate that the US military cannot be deterred or defeated. If that means widespread destruction, we must accept the price. Most of Fallujah's residents -- those who wish to live in peace -- have already fled. Those who remain have made their choice. We need to pursue the terrorists remorselessly . . .

"That means killing. While we strive to obey the internationally recognized laws of war (though our enemies do not), our goal should be to target the terrorists and insurgents so forcefully that few survive to raise their hands in surrender. We don't need more complaints about our treatment of prisoners from the global forces of appeasement. We need terrorists dead in the dust. And the world needs to see their corpses . . .

"Even if Fallujah has to go the way of Carthage, reduced to shards, the price will be worth it. We need to demonstrate our strength of will to the world, to show that there is only one possible result when madmen take on America."

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Though the carnage carried out by Hitler's regime was on a different scale than that now being committed by the Bush administration, there are striking parallels. For the first time since the Wehrmacht swept through Europe, the world is witnessing a major imperialist power launching an unjustifiable war, placing an entire people under military occupation and carrying out acts of collective and visible punishment against a civilian populace. The US media's wretched connivance in this deception is incredible, as incredible as the fact that this war, based on undeniable lies as it was, was sold to the American people as the gospel truth ordained by God.

To be honest, George Bush is not the first US president ordering the state's machinery to pulverize nations and peoples abroad. Even a hurried analysis of the American's government's conduct in the last century makes for a most damning indictment. Out of the US's past foreign policy woodwork, crawl out numerous invasions, bombings, overthrowing governments, suppressing movements for social change, assassinating political leaders, perverting elections, manipulating labor unions, manufacturing "news", selling blatant lies, death squads, torture, biological warfare, depleted uranium, drug trafficking, mercenaries . . . you name it.

This terrorizing of nations and individuals by various US governments has been going on full bore since at least the late 1890s, when Americans obliterated a million Filipinos to keep

them safe from the Spanish. 60 million Native Americans, the children of a lesser God, were exterminated by the orders of earlier administrations throughout the 19th century. The difference with the past is that George Bush does it in the name of his God, a God far superior to any other and sanctioned fully by his coterie. Ironically, both George Bush and his nemesis, Osama Bin Laden, refer to God almost equal number of times in their public pronouncements.

The United States went into Afghanistan to kill or capture Osama Bin Laden. They killed 10,000 innocent Afghans but could not find their man. They went into Iraq to discover and eliminate Saddam's WMDs. They killed tens of thousands of Iraqis but found no WMD. They laid siege to the city of Fallujah to kill or capture Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi. The city and its inhabitants have been blown to smithereens but there is no Zarqawi. Is it not only too convenient? Next when they want to attack Pakistan, or Iran, they simply have to say that Bin Laden is taking refuge there. Just like the next Iraqi city awaiting the fate of Fallujah will be the latest refuge of Zarqawi; the WMDs too could next fly to Syria or may be even Saudi Arabia. Is one imagining things here? Or is it that the US imperialism is indeed now riding full time on the back of gargantuan lies?

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After granting George Bush a carte blanche to do what he likes the American citizens, of course, continue their daily lives oblivious to what is being done in their name. Between their work places and the nearest fast food joints, they just do not have enough time to check back on the activities of the man who is playing the Terminator in the name of God and in their name.

Those who do get to know a little are in a constant state of denial. One thing is sure though. Just like in post-war Germany where some even denied the holocaust. "We didn't know what was happening" is bound to become a cliché that will one day be used to ridicule Americans who claim ignorance of the atrocities committed by their administration in their name. Ironically, Khomeini died trying to get people to see America as "the great Satan," It took George W. Bush and his cohorts just four years to do exactly that, and not just in the eyes of the Muslim world.

As America sinks deeper into the heart of darkness, its thinking citizens need to jolt themselves out of their apathy. With each passing day their beloved America is scaling ever greater heights of hideous glories. The man in charge, George W. Bush, is actually living the throes of his apocalyptic dream of "*I am become death-the destroyer of the worlds*". He codenamed his destruction of Fallujah as "Operation Phantom Fury". But as the falsehood dies and gives way to truth, as all lies must one day, it will be the Iraqi dead that will form a legion of phantoms and would throng around Americans in a macabre dance to haunt them for decades. The fury of those phantoms will be hair raising.

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### **The Euphrates flows on.**

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The writer, a former officer of the Pakistan Air Force, is now based in the United Arab Emirates.

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