

Peace Is Not Paved With Violence

Dr. Amaal V.E. Tokars

When the United States declared war on Iraq in 2003 Nelson Mandela declared that the invasion should be “condemned in the strongest terms.” The voices of such statesmen from around the world were not centerpiece to the information being conveyed to American citizens during the time leading up to the invasion. Centerpiece to that information was strong conveyances linking Iraq to the Taliban, terror, and weapons of mass destruction. These powerful conveyances were inaccurate and fear-producing. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, al-Qaida forces have been allowed to enter the country, terror now reigns, and potential for weapons of mass destruction is mounting.

“Just as hegemony in the form of fear-producing alerts about the other precedes every war, culturally damaging symbols of hegemony precedes every cultural-historical genocide (*Seduced by Fear*, 2007).” The lack of authenticity and transparency in the way many issues have been underrepresented, overrepresented, or just distorted through misinformation is culturally damaging and paradoxical to the possibilities of peace. Relatively little was conveyed the American citizens about troops in 2003 firing upon 100 to 200 unarmed protesters

in Falluja, Iraq. Very little was conveyed to the American citizens when a Los Angeles Times reporter discovered in 2005 that the Pentagon had contracted with a Washington D.C. firm to help place stories inside Iraq while sometimes posing as freelance reporters when delivering stories to Baghdad media outlets. Although prior to the US invasion of Iraq; the Shiite were often being referred to as the minority, they actually represent the majority of the Iraqi peoples. Recently it was reported that Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad were to meet with the U.S. Administration on the topic of peace. Inauthentic conveyances create a textual imagery that is profoundly culturally damaging. In September, 51 tortured and slain bodies were discovered strewn about Baghdad in a 24-hr. period. The cultural-historical genocide of these peoples and this place is unfolding before us.

There is a parallel between the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan in that the violence of the U.S. war has been followed by unprecedented violence during U.S. occupation. Korean news; Chosun, reported in September that British Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett met with President Talabani to discuss the eventual withdrawal of British troops from Iraq, but that the United States had delayed a ceremony

scheduled for handing the command of the Iraqi army to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki due to some technicalities. The International Herald Tribune of Europe reported in September that France, Germany, and Turkey have refused to provide more personnel for the war in Afghanistan. The clear correlation between war/occupation and violence resounds from around the world. When Afghan President Hamid Karzai and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf met on the topic of peace there was reported acknowledgment on the relationship between poppies, the Taliban, and violence. Although the U.S. had gone to war with Afghanistan to decimate and retaliate against those responsible for the terror attacks on the World Trade Centers and the Pentagon, there was no reported acknowledgment of the relationship between war, occupation, and violence.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Amaal Tokars holds a doctoral degree in Education and Anthropology. She has spent her professional career working in the diverse arena of human services and is the author of the upcoming book: *America & Iraq: Seduced by Fear*, a well-researched analysis related to leadership and policy and cultural competence. Dr. Tokars holds citizenship in Canada, Iraqi, and United States which gives her a powerful perspective few can have. Currently she resides in the Chicago area with her family. Her hope is that her work promotes dialogue on the meaning of citizenship in our global society and that all citizens will be a valued voice in the shaping of our lived history. Press kit can be obtained by media at <http://www.seducedbyfear.com/>