

# Who Do You Trust For The Truth?

## An American-Iraqi Seduction Review

### Dr. Amaal V.E. Tokars

YOU KEEP UP with the news. Poof! You are the “knowledgeable American” who can amaze and entertain friends by giving savvy, sage comments about world events. Right? Could an Iraqi citizen say the same? No, no, you say while sadly shaking your head, they are so backward and don’t have the advantages we Americans have... those poor people.

Ever wonder what the conversation would have sounded like from the Brits along about 1776 when we Yanks were trying to establish an independent government after a war for freedom? Maybe something like this: We (Brits) know what is right, best. Those poor colonials, they are so backward and don’t have the advantages we have...

What your mind takes in daily forms “textual imagery,” i.e., the way you see things, the way your mind creates the truth of who you are in relation to current events. Who do you trust to mold and shape your mind? A study recently conducted in Berkeley, California found that Americans who scored poorly on the accuracy of current event facts also had opinions that varied widely from those who scored better. As reported by Dr. Marc Sapor, Executive Director of Retro Poll: In an October survey, 53% of Americans polled knew that there were no Iraqis among those implicated in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centers. A resulting correlation between knowledge of current events and opinions held:

- 86% Think Saddam Hussein was linked to Al Qaeda

✓ agree prisoners at Guantanamo must be guilty

- 75% Think Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden linked

✓ oppose military withdrawal from Iraq

- 56% Know Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden not linked

✓ stand in favor of military withdrawal

- 76% Know Iraqi not linked to the Al Qaeda 9/11 attacks

✓ agree that the handling of the Katrina disaster in New Orleans, Louisiana was negligent

- 58% Think Iraqi is linked to the Al Qaeda 9/11 attacks

✓ agree the handling of the Katrina disaster in New Orleans, Louisiana was reasonable

The issue is what you allow to enter your mind to create your opinion! At some level we think that if we take in enough images and sensationalism (textual imagery) from the daily news sources we “rightly” know the truth! That means we can vote intelligently, pass on the “right opinion” to our children, “rightly inform” our neighbors, co-workers, customers, community....

Whoa, stop the horses and circle the wagons! What you hear, read, and see is not necessarily what to accept then pass on. In fact, if that is your information base, you are the one screaming

the loudest when world events don’t fit the paradigm of what you have come to “believe.” The beginning of fear, of being seduced by fear occurs because you have been seduced by superficial and manipulated “prime time” media, mostly in search of ratings before facts.

Who, what, where do you trust to continue to form your perspective? Remember, someone is rearing a family or influencing a friend based on how you influenced them to understand current events, that is, by osmosis and repeated textual imagery or by the truth based on known facts without “spin.” An old adage goes something like this: Believe 50% of what you see (less now since image altering software), 25% of what you read (images created by text), and nothing you hear. (Remember the disastrous miscommunication in the game of “gossip”?)

How do you find truth? Pay attention to more than one source; use today’s technology to get the facts from the original event or source. Critical to understanding your place in history requires learning about other cultures face to face; when that is impossible, read non-news sources like biographical accounts.

Be aware of the manipulation of text and images:

- Along with directly linking Iraq to the Al Qaeda attacks on the World Trade Centers, Iraq was indirectly linked to Al Qaeda through text that presented separate articles of each on the same page or repeatedly mentioned both in the same article.

- Simultaneous texts for and against war:

- ✓ Text extolling the virtues of nation building were common prior to the invasion of Iraq.

- ✓ Text discredited opposition to war as unpatriotic/unsympathetic to families who lost so much in the 9/11 attacks or to families with loved ones in the military.

- The “cure” as bad as the “ailment.”

- o Weapons of mass destruction - clear and present danger.

- ✓ Images of the glory of Iraqi liberation - an effective smoke screen for the oppressive misery delivered to them under that same banner.

Too many of us lack accurate knowledge of world events, that is, until it is our son or daughter in the face of a ter-

rorist assault or our country with exploding buildings. Without that kind of motivation, we listen to the news, shake our heads, and turn to another episode of our favorite show.

How goes the USA, so goes the world may be true for now, but what about tomorrow? If we Americans are not willing to take the effort to find the truth and use it to vote, talk to our children, and offer a helping hand to our global neighbors, it is not a stretch to say that freedom’s bell may ring no more; 200+ years is a far cry from forever!

Opinions based on inaccurate information will inevitably perpetuate worldviews that leave us seduced by fear. It is up to you and me to keep the facts in the forefront and fear in the background. Trusting anything other than the whole truth and nothing but the truth may set up an untenable instability that could leave us “the poor little

things” for the next global leader to mutter over.

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#### 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/>

