

How they see us: The never-ending occupation of Iraq

It is sickening to witness the horrors that George W. Bush has wrought in Iraq, said Saudi Arabia's *Saudi Gazette* in an editorial. In five years of war and occupation, the U.S. has killed "hundreds of thousands of innocent Iraqis," while some 4,000 American soldiers have now lost their lives. And for what? The Iraqi people are terrorized by militias and insurgents, not to mention occupying troops. Mistrust, even hatred, between Iraq's Shiites and Sunnis is rampant. Both the American and the Iraqi economies are in ruins. "Never before, not even during the Vietnam era, has respect for America been so low." The war has been an utter catastrophe—for America, for Iraq, and for the world.

It's too easy to write off America's war in Iraq as a failure, said Salah al-Din Hafiz in Qatar's *Al-Watan*. If you truly believe the U.S. wanted to create a peaceful democracy in Iraq, then yes, it failed. But America's real goals were quite different. The U.S. has "succeeded in destroying a big and rich Arab country." It has "succeeded in using Iraq to spread constructive chaos, as the whole Arab world is now



Patrolling Baqubah: U.S. troops inspire both confidence and fear.

living amid tension, violence, terrorism, and hatred." It has succeeded "in controlling Iraqi oil." And it has ignited sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Shiites across the whole Arab world, undermining Arab unity and rendering the Arab nation too weak to stand up against American and Israeli interests.

Actually, from inside Iraq, things don't look quite so dire, said Ali Khlayf in Iraq's *Al-Adalah*. "Much has been

achieved thus far." Since the toppling of the brutal dictator Saddam Hussein, Iraqis have voted in elections in which they had a real choice of parties. "The freedom gained by the Iraqi people is worth all the sacrifices made to establish democracy in Iraq." Obviously, we still have far to go, both to control the sectarian violence and to create a united government. But we have not become discouraged. "Iraqis are ready to offer more to protect our achievements."

We just need to get our sovereignty back, said Iraq's *Al-Bayinah al-Jadidah*. Before the U.S. invasion, the U.N. Security Council invoked Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter, which authorized the use of force to protect international peace and security. Five years on, it is high time to "get Iraq out from under the provisions of Chapter 7." Iraqi leaders need to argue "for the issuance of a new U.N. resolution" that revokes all previous resolutions issued against the Saddam-era Iraq. Only when we fully control our sovereignty can we control the violence on our territory.