

Iran's Quds Force Leaders in Iraq Should Be Tried for War Crimes

Editorial

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It would be like releasing six Osama bin Ladens after they had attacked, not just three buildings in the United States, but an entire city of a million people. Incredibly, that's what the Pentagon may have up its sleeve with five Iranian military commanders it captured in Iraq last year.

As we reported in our last issue, the Ayatollah-directed Quds Force has been implicated in supplying and training militias in Iraq, both Sunni and Shia, to carry out death squad killings, suicide bombings and IED attacks on Coalition troops. The fact

it's time the United States put the five Quds Force characters it already has under lock and key on trial for their war crimes. (Plenty of weapons caches and incriminating documents were found at the time of their capture.)

As a signatory to the Geneva Conventions which has integrated the war rules into its own military code, the United States has legal jurisdiction to commence such proceedings tomorrow. And no matter how much the Administration attempts to circumvent the applicability of the conventions for its own ends, our treaty obligations remain intact. Congress should step up pressure to get these trials on the docket.

Without decisive action to punish war criminals, we could well see another million dead in Iraq in three years. Moreover, negotiations with an Islamic regime with a long record of extrajudicial killings and terrorist attacks belong in the realm of the absurd, not on the evening news.



Photo by Cpl. Julian Billmair

A U.S. Marine assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 10th Marines, plays with an Iraqi child, June 9, 2007.

that Iran is now pretty much running Iraq's parliament gives you an idea of how effective the ayatollahs' game plan has been.

Drawing from the casualty figures provided last fall by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, it's clear nearly a million Iraqis have been killed over the past three years. That's four or five times the estimate for Darfur in the same time period.

In the case of Sudan, the presence of sectarian strife and civil war didn't mitigate the liability of the government in Khartoum. Warrants were issued for high-level officials and



Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Dennis J. Henry Jr. U.S. Army soldiers hand out food and other items to Iraqi civilians in Mahmudiyah, Iraq, June 9, 2007.

Since December, Iran has taken at least five Iranian Americans hostage, including three women. They include Haleh Esfandiari, the 67-year-old director of the Middle East program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and Radio Farda journalist Parnaz Azima, 59. The ayatollahs are angling, no doubt, to make a trade.

Fortunately, Tehran is so dependent on its oil exports, that simply threatening to cut off its distribution channels should be enough to free the hostages.

Terrorism never ends with this government, but it needs to end with

the five Quds Force leaders. If the United States frees them, what kind of message will that send to the families of American servicemen and women (to say nothing of the Iraqis) who died at the hands of their killing machine?



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Robert C. Brogan

U.S. Army soldiers bandage an Iraqi girl's foot after cleaning her wound during a cooperative medical engagement in Tahrir, Iraq, July 3, 2007.

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