# New York Times calls for more troops and more Fallujahs

**Kate Randall**
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Over the weekend, the *New York Times* placed its enthusiastic imprimatur on the US military destruction of Fallujah, arguing only that more American troops were needed to prevent the resurgence of Iraqi resistance in the gutted city and to carry out similar operations in other anti-US strongholds.

In a piece published last Sunday entitled "Postcards from Iraq," *Times* foreign affairs columnist Thomas Friedman presented a predictably noxious justification of the mass killing, hailing it as a great advance in the struggle to "democratize" the tortured country. Friedman could barely contain his delight over the unequal contest between the most powerful and lethal military force in the world and poorly armed Iraqi patriots who are prepared to give their lives to drive out the American occupiers and their Quisling stooges, headed by interim Prime Minister and longtime CIA asset Iyad Allawi.

Friedman wrote: "[M]aybe the most important story in Iraq was the fact that while Fallujah was exploding, 106 Iraqi parties and individuals registered to run in the January elections." This paean to democracy, exemplified by the smoking ruins of a city whose only crime was to oppose the US military takeover of Iraq, was the latest in a long line of columns portraying the subjugation of the country as a crusade for democracy and progress in the Middle East.

The US, he wrote, "is trying to plant the seeds of decent, consensual government in some very harsh soil." He continued: "We are not doing nation building in Iraq. That presumes that there was already a coherent nation there and all that is needed is a little time and security for it to be rebuilt. We are actually doing nation creating."

In the twisted view of this apologist for US imperialism, "nation creating" is synonymous with saturation bombing, the leveling of mosques, hospitals and homes, and the slaughter of thousands of civilians. Many of the wounded bled to death, afraid to leave their homes to seek medical attention because US troops had been given orders to shoot to kill anything that moved in the streets.

That Friedman speaks for the *Times* as a whole was underscored by an editorial appearing the following day, headlined "Costly Troop Deficit in Iraq." The *Times'* editors opined that the lesson to be drawn from the "swift and stunning American military sweep through Fallujah this month" is that "20,000 to 40,000 more soldiers are needed right away."

On the eve of the assault on Fallujah, as the *World Socialist Web Site* noted (See: "*New York Times* calls for more troops in Iraq," November 9, 2004), the *Times* signaled its approval, in advance, of the impending slaughter. In the aftermath, with, in the editorial's own words, "uncounted residences and public facilities... pounded into rubble," the voice of the so-called liberal establishment in America evinces not the slightest remorse or moral reservations over the bloodletting. On the contrary, it hails the attack and calls for more of the same.

The *Times'* enthusiastic support for the assault on Fallujah is further confirmation that the invasion and occupation of the country are not simply Bush administration policy. The American seizure of the oil-rich country is backed by an overwhelming consensus within the US political establishment and corporate ruling elite, including the Democratic Party.

In lockstep with the Bush administration, the *Times* holds up the elections in Iraq, scheduled for January 30, as the justification for war crimes against defenseless populations. These elections, as the *Times* is well aware, are to be held under conditions of state terror

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against opponents of the US occupation and the Allawi government every bit as violent and pervasive as that exercised by Saddam Hussein.

As US forces continue their offensive in the region south of Baghdad, Allawi has unleashed massive repression. Dozens of cities and towns, including Baghdad, have been placed under curfew, and US and Iraqi government troops have raided numerous mosques, closed down newspapers, and arrested hundreds of dissidents.

Earlier this week, two prominent Sunni clerics who were outspoken opponents of the occupation and advocates of a boycott of the elections were shot and killed by masked gunmen north of Baghdad. Such methods are the modus operandi of Allawi, who began his political career as a thug for the Baathist regime, then threw in his lot with the US and, while on the CIA payroll, organized terror bombings in Iraq in the mid-1990s. In July, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *Age* newspapers published eyewitness accounts of how Allawi personally carried out the summary execution of six prisoners at a security center in Baghdad the previous month.

The *Times*' strong support for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry in the November 2 election highlights the fact that a Kerry administration would be conducting a no less brutal policy in Iraq. Notwithstanding the anti-war sentiments of the vast majority of those who voted for Kerry, there is no fundamental difference between the two parties on US imperialism's drive for global hegemony and the use of military violence to achieve it.

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