

Outrage Spreads in Arab World

By Emily Wax, *Washington Post* Foreign Service.

A shuddering sense of outrage at President Bush and the U.S. fell over the Arab world on March 30 as TV networks and newspapers reported a U.S. air assault that Iraqi officials said killed 58 people at a vegetable market in Baghdad. "Monstrous martyrdom in Baghdad," said a huge headline the *al-Dustur* newspaper in Amman, Jordan. "Dreadful massacre in Baghdad," read a banner headline in Egypt's mass circulation *Akhbar al-Yawm*. Photos of two young victims of the blast covered half its front page.

"Yet another massacre by the coalition of invaders," read the headline in Saudi Arabia's popular *al-Riyadh* daily. "Mr. Bush has lost us. We are gone. Enough. That's the end," said DAA Rashwan, head of the comparative politics unit at the Al-Abram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. "If America starts winning tomorrow, there will be suicide bombing that will start in America the next day. It is a whole new level now."

The anger was a clear sign that U.S.-Arab relations, despite the Bush administration's campaign to win hearts and minds, was at a low point. "Bush is an occupier and terrorist. He thought he was playing a video game," said George Elnaber, 36, the Arab Christian owner of an Amman supermarket. "We hate Americans more than we hate Saddam now."

The popular al-Jazeera satellite TV network broadcast the funerals of those killed at the market. It repeatedly showed pictures of severed body parts and wounded toddlers bandaged and crying in hospital beds." Those pictures have showed that America's war is not only against the Iraqi regime and the Iraqi army, but also

against the Iraqi children and elderly. "How can we trust them now?" said Mahmoud Sahiouny, 19, a Syrian computer science student in Beirut.

The U.S. has said it is investigating whether its forces caused the market blast Friday in a mainly Shiite neighborhood of Baghdad. Many Arabs said the bloodshed was clearly the fault of the U.S. A group of women using computers at a Cairo internet café displayed their e-mails containing pictures of funerals, wailing women, mourning men and the bodies of children in cradle-sized coffins.

"This is a media war, and America will realize sooner or later that we Arabs have a million alternatives now," Rana Khoury, 20, a political science student at American University of Beirut. "What really hurts is when I turned to American stations,



Of the 35 on this bus, only five survived. Dr. Dhiya Sultani, said "many of the people on the bus were decapitated."

Source: Robert Collier, "Hundreds in Iraqi Town's Hospital. Some Apparently the Victims of Cluster Bombs," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 3, 2003.

they were talking about the humanitarian aid that the allies are providing for the Iraqi people. They didn't even mention those who were massacred." The outrage was also felt in Syria, which suffered war casualties when a U.S. missile accidentally hit a busload of civilians Monday in Iraq about 100 miles from the Syrian border." I was watching what was happening and I found myself cursing for the first time in my life," a 17-year-old student named Lama told the Reuters news agency. "I felt I wanted to kill, not only curse." In Cairo, some residents with long ties to the U.S. said that bomb-



"We don't do body counts"
General Tommy Franks,
U.S. Central Command

But www.iraqbodycount.net does. This site tracks the date, time, location, target, weapons used, number of deaths and sources on all the war-related, civilian deaths in Iraq.

ing civilians made them lose all hope that relations could return to normal.

"It is as if you are watching a horror movie," said Summer Said, a journalist for the *Cairo Times*. "I thought, at first, okay, maybe it isn't a war for oil. Maybe America does want to help. Now, it's genocide to me. Is the American government trying to exterminate Arabs?"

"This war is affecting civilians primarily. I did not expect to see civilians bombed and I feel exceedingly angry," wrote Ezzat El Kamhawy, a respected Egyptian novelist. "This war can only harm the future of democracy in the area.... What is happening does not implicate the future of Arabs alone but the future of America herself."

Some of those interviewed said they hated leaders like Osama bin Laden but now they were ready to fight and believed that attacks on the U.S. would be justified. "For every man they kill, there will be 4 or 5 who want revenge for this person's life. They can't just kill people and have it be forgotten," said Ali Sabra, 43, a building attendant in Cairo. "America is our enemy now. They have millions of Muslims praying against them every day."

Source: *Washington Post*, March 30, 2003. <www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A48367-2003Mar29.html>