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Subject: Facts, not Hype

Posted by [Aircraftkiller](#) on Wed, 22 Sep 2004 18:16:31 GMT

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I was asked to pass this on, and so I will...

the USMC on the Multi-National Corps staff in Baghdad. The analysts and pundits who don't see what I see on a daily basis, in my opinion, have very little credibility to talk about the situation – especially if they have yet to set foot in Iraq. Everything Americans believe about Iraq is simply perception filtered through one's latent prejudices until you are face-to-face with reality.

If you haven't seen, or don't remember, the John Wayne movie, *The Green Berets*, you should watch it this weekend. Pay special attention to the character of the reporter, Mr. Beckwith. His experience is directly related to the situation here. You'll have a different perspective on Iraq after the movie is over.)

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The US media is abuzz today with the news of an intelligence report that is very negative about the prospects for Iraq's future. CNN's website says, "[The] National Intelligence Estimate was sent to the White House in July with a classified warning predicting the best case for the car bombings and kidnappings in Baghdad in the past couple days are being portrayed in the media as more proof of absolute chaos and the intransigence of the insurgency.

>From where I sit, at the Operational Headquarters in Baghdad, that just isn't the case.

most glaring issue with its relevance is the fact that it was delivered to the White House in July. That means that the information that was used to derive the intelligence was gathered in the Spring – in the immediate aftermath of the April battle for Fallujah, and other events. The report doesn't cover what has happened in July or August, let alone September.

The naysayers will point to the recent battles in Najaf and draw parallels between that and what happened in Fallujah in April. They aren't even close. The bad guys did us a HUGE favor by gathering together in one place and trying to make a stand. It allowed us to focus on them and defeat them. Make no mistake, Al Sadr's troops were thoroughly smashed. The estimated enemy killed in action is huge. Before the battles, the residents of the city were afraid to walk the streets. Al Sadr's enforcers would seize people and bring them to his Islamic court where sentence was passed for religious or other violations. Long before the battles people were

Now Najafians can and do walk their streets in safety. Commerce has returned and the city is being rebuilt. Iraqi security forces and US troops are welcomed and smiled upon. That city was liberated again. It was not like Fallujah – the bad guys lost and are in hiding or dead.

You may not have even heard about the city of Samarra. Two weeks ago, that Sunni Triangle city from the insurgents and foreign fighters that were there and let them know they weren't welcome. They stopped hosting them in their houses and the mayor of the town brokered a deal with the US commander to return Iraqi government sovereignty to the city without a fight. The people saw what was on the horizon and decided they didn't want their city looking like Fallujah in April or Najaf in August.

mean that those towns are completely pacified? No. What it does mean is that we are learning how to do this the right way. The US commander in Samarra saw an opportunity and took it – probably the biggest victory of his military career and nary a shot was fired in anger. Things will still happen in those cities, and you can be sure that the bad guys really want to take them back. Those achievements, more than anything else in my opinion, account for the surge in violence in recent days – especially the violence directed at Iraqis by the insurgents. Both in Najaf and Samarra ordinary people stepped out and took sides with the Iraqi government against the insurgents, and the bad guys are hopping mad. They are trying to instill fear once again. The worst thing we could do now is pull back and let that scum back into people's homes and lives.

So, you may hear analysts and prognosticators on CNN, ABC and the like in the next few days talking about how bleak the situation is here in Iraq, but from where I sit, it's looking significantly better now than when I got here. The momentum is moving in our favor, and all Americans need to know that, so please, please, pass this on to those who care and will pass it on to others. It is very demoralizing for us here in uniform to read & hear such negativity in our press. It is fodder for our enemies to use against us and against the vast majority of Iraqis who want their new government to succeed. It causes the American public to start thinking about the

generations to come, and Muslim militants would claim a huge victory, causing us to have to

before we finish the job, and thus less willing to openly support their interim government and US/Coalition activities. We are realizing significant progress here – not propagandist progress, but real strides are being made. It's terrible to see our national morale, and support for what we're doing here, jeopardized by sensationalized stories hyped by media giants whose #1 priority is advertising income followed closely by their political agenda; getting the story straight falls much further down on their priority scale, as Dan Rather and CBS News have so aptly demonstrated in the last week.