

Turning Monsters into Martyrs

By: Hesam Alizadeh

Well it was that time of the year again folks. A joyous time where the stores offered their best sales, where kids got to spend a couple of weeks at home, and where several religions celebrated the birth / beginning / culmination of their one thing or another. Yet this year, the citizens of this country were treated to a little piece of post Christmas pornography brought to us by the new democratically elected government of Iraq.

Apparently, on Friday night, December 29 the new Iraqi government executed Saddam Hussein in a televised debacle which rivaled those of the ones broadcast over Soviet state run media at the height of the Cold War. Now I know what everyone out there is saying, "Saddam was monster who deserved to be executed!"



Ok, who the hell is disagreeing with that?

But the one thing the proponents of this execution don't realize is that what happened Friday night was nothing more than a new opening for those who seek to widen the sectarian divide within Middle Eastern societies. Now I know that in such an instance proof is almost impossible before the situation actually materializes, but what we can do is analyze the situation step by step and in doing so draw a semi-logical conclusion from the entire debacle. First, since his ascension to the presidency of Iraq in 1979 Saddam Hussein has claimed Iran and Iranian people as his #1 enemy, and going as far equating even the Shia leadership in Iraq with the Mullahs in Tehran.

Thus by placing Hussein's fate in the hands of the Shia led government (which has very close ties with Tehran), the United States has invariably made a connection in the minds of Sunni Arabs from Morocco to Jordan that this move was, if nothing else, more a concession to Iran and an insult to them from the Americans, than actual justice being served. Second, the execution took place on the morning of December 30, 2006, exactly one hour before the start of Eid al-Adha, or Eid of the sacrifice for the Sunnis. Now this is important because this year Eid started on December 29th for the Sunnis as opposed to December 30th for the Shia, which in essence meant that there weren't any religious insensitivities



toward the Shia to take into account, only towards the Sunnis. And finally, a recent cell phone video has been circulating around the internet which shows the entirety of the execution from beginning to end complete with taunts and a close up of a dead Saddam Hussein's face.

Now maybe I'm being naïve here. After all Saddam was a monster who tortured and kill without mercy during his 24 year reign, and perhaps he did deserve to die a vengeful death at the hands of his enemies, but as an Iranian-American who has lived in this country for 20 plus years, I've grown accustomed to the idea that true justice cannot be dealt out by the victim(s), simply because of the fact that regardless of their good intentions, the party which is handling the punishment will not be able to uphold the standards necessary to insure an unbiased and valid implementation of the law.

Thus under such circumstances an execution which should have been quick, private and clean has turned into a perfect combination of a three ring circus and a public lynching. Now as stated before, I know that Saddam Hussein was a vile tyrant, after all he is also responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iranians (a fact which has been overlooked by our current administration in Washington).

But despite this fact, many see the highly publicized and televised execution of this monster as nothing more than another match being thrown on the gas soaked timber pile which is the Middle East, adding more tension to a region which by all logic should have blown up a long time ago.

So the next time you see the video of this execution on the net, or listen to the pundits praising such a move, just remember one thing, Saddam Hussein and his regime died back in 2003, all we did on Friday night was to snap the neck of an old man and give motivation to more Arab youths who might have been on the fence about the entire situation in the middle east to strap on a suicide belt and join the party.

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January 16 - March 16, 2006

Opening Reception: Saturday, January 20, 6-8 PM

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