

The Road to Baghdad

(2003) RATED R-- VIOLENT CONTENT, ADULT LANGUAGE & SITUATIONS



The Anti-War Crossfire

Who is shocked when criticized for an unpopular view? Who gets mad if their protest views lead to lower sales or demographics? Hollywood celebrities and pop singers. And they don't like it. They like to tell you what you should like and buy (mainly their wares) because they have reached the pinnacle of pop culture, the modern Star. Name recognition does not lead to an increased IQ or understanding of the issues of the day.

The protesters own blundering the issue revealed their true intent. The protests were Anti-Bush as president, than the war. They hate Bush. Any excuse to tear at him will do.

Bob Hope and Bing Crosby made six road pictures. The Road to Baghdad was not one of them. It starred George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld in a mad dash across the desert in search and destruction caper against a villain, a mad man with a Groucho Marx mustache. They were fleeing the bows and arrows of the bumbling European Three Stooges, Chirac, Schroeder and Putin, for a liberating adventure across the barren Arab desert in search for starry eyed oasis mirage women named Willi Milli Destruction (WMD) and Miss Olive Oils.

Their mad dash left the Stooges slapping themselves silly. They hit the road like a sandstorm. It was no slow trek, it was a testosterone drag race across country to the capitol. And who do they find in their way? A madman, Saddam Insane, and his two crazy sons.

"Is this Persia? The Ottoman Empire? A dusty back lot at Universal Studios?" Hope would have quipped directly into the chase camera. "Hey what are YOU guys doing here?" he would say to the cable news crews, "if you wanted to get bombed you should have stayed in the hotel bar."

Critics have tried to label the effort in terms of the minor supporting players: first, General Chaos, then later Colonel Klink, to the end, where the story turns to Major Looting. But those characters were not in the original script by General Ballpark Franks.

Filmed only in 21 days on location in Iraq. It may look like it was filmed in black and white, but that is how Iraq looks in color. ☆☆☆1/2

They may have respected his attitude of invading a neighbor instead of paying his Kuwaiti debts. They admired him for standing up against the US.

But in the wake of the Republican Guards weak defensive effort, Mideast leaders have to think twice about anti-American bashing because the US appears to have moved into the neighborhood and are taking the high ground.

The Bush administration has a black and white view. Either you are with us or you are against us. There is no middle gray area. So when the infantry finds Russian missiles dated 2000, and French arms dated 2002, and new Yemen ammo in the Republican Guard bunkers, all in violation of UN sanction resolutions, the list of friends shrinks. The result of this conflict may be more in the reasons why our alleged allies were against us in the first place than actually liberating Iraq.

US forces have found \$650 million in greenbacks in an affluent Baghdad suburb. Now, who doesn't like to have a little walking around money, but this is obscene. The coalition is looking for the finance minister who may have another \$250 million in cash stashed somewhere in town.

This shows several interesting things. First, Saddam's economy was based upon the excesses of a black market mentality against his own people. The oil for food program was a fraud because the food never

reached the people, and Saddam kept a pipeline to Syria open and pumping 200,000 gallons of crude a day across the border. The illicit oil sales were made in cash or secret bank accounts.

Second, what was the currency of choice for this regime? The painted monopoly money with Saddam's portrait? No, it was good old U.S. dollar. Our dollar is not the de facto world currency, it is only trusted IOU that can be readily stowed away, used for bribes, and set up your international arms dealerships.

Third, Syria should feel uneasy. Reports have Saddam's henchmen fleeing to Syria. The pipeline of oil went to it. The issue of the 4th MIF going to Damascus is legitimate. Historians still hear the echos of Patton who wanted to continue marching from Berlin to Moscow at the end of World War II.

The Iraqi regime had 12 years to plan for the fight. Some things still don't seem right. The Iraqi Air Force never launched a sortie. Reports have soldiers finding only 15 planes and 5 helicopters hidden in the desert. Where did that major defense force go? Out of the country? A military regime in exile until the United States forms a fragile democracy, then leaves to swoop down from the borders to reclaim Baghdad?

One should follow the scented slither of the retreating foe to make sure the head of the snake is firmly decapitated from the body of the opposition.

Otherwise it will heal under the canopy of the naysayers who will say "the Coalition won the War, but can it win the Peace?"

The Iraqi literai like to remind the world that Iraq is the cradle of modern civilization. Its people have the concept of property rights, in a medieval sense that possession is the law. An educated populous should be able to handle democratic principles in the transition to self-rule.

The thorny issue will be the ethnic hatred that is volcanically imbedded into their culture. The Kurds hate the Turkmen. The Shias hate the Sunnis. And inside each identity are rival sub-clans and battling clerics. It took the United States 85 years and 4 bloody years of civil war to address its basic "diversity" issue. One cannot expect Iraq to shed thousands of years of distrust in 20 days.

A long term American presence is necessary to stabilize the country and the region. At what cost? The U.S. should take as its liberation fee three air bases in Iraq (H3, Rasheed (Baghdad), and Basra). The Pentagon can shift the operations from Germany to Iraq which would immediately jolt the local economy. German bases were in place to keep the cold war peace and a central location to put out wild-fires in the Euro-continent. But the real defense of America lies south, in the Persian Gulf, and those new bases will put a cold war check on those who want to

harbor terrorists. Then the US should be reimbursed from oil.

There is nothing wrong in sharing the wealth with the Iraqi people. A two-way partnership is better than the past one-way dictatorship to the average Iraqi.

So it costs \$70 billion to rebuild Iraq. Big deal. Saddam spent more than \$2 billion on new palaces since 1991. The tap into Syria would generate alone more than \$1.4 billion annually. The resources are present to rebuild a nation; the important point is how the resource revenue is allocated and spent.

If Colin Powell had problems with his equals in the UN Security Council, he will probably have a nightmare in soothing the egos of the Iraqi ethnic factions. He could cut to the chase: treat everyone equally. The U.S. will be the banker, arbitrator and mentor. If you don't want to participate, fine. If you want to participate, fine, here are the rules. No exceptions.

If the UN wants a role, it should be left to filling sandbags for Fidel Castro. The UN has shown its irrelevancy. Blix wants his inspectors back in Iraq. Hey, the war is OVER-- Saddam is GONE --- inspections are moot. But the Germans have nothing to do but for the inspection program. Too bad.

The argument is that the US will terraform Iraq into a suburban strip mall by the end of the year. I don't see a rush to produce a movie called "Dude, Where's My Camel?" being force fed to Najjar residents. The

people want electricity and a stable potable water supply. Let American companies reconnect basic utility services. We are in global recession; why should not United States businesses NOT profit from the opportunity to rebuild? What is the logic to reward France, Germany, or Russia with post-war contracts for being against the war? And in some terms, aiding the regime in the war against the U.S.

Those nations can't ask for a redeal after the hand has been dealt. They have to play the cards they had before the war. They placed their bets on Saddam, and they lost. Too bad. You have no more chips to play at this table. "Game over." That's what the Iraqi UN envoy said on April 9th when he scurried from the limelight of the press.

One grand lesson that was captured and broadcast by the embedded media to the world that will be key to our future. The world saw the American soldier as very intelligent, well spoken, well trained, and willing to get dirty to achieve his mission. The international community never thought the American public would stomach US casualties on foreign soil under a "controversial preemptory war" policy. The international community was wrong about the US. Homeland security has no borders.

And this is important because there are bigger bullies on the next block, like North Korea or China, where anti-American



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The Road to the White House in 2008 will run through Baghdad. Colin Powell had completed his international doctorate on foreign relations backstabbing with his UN presentations. Conti Rice has stayed in the background putting out domestic policy fires. General Vincent Brooks has lead the briefings in the command theatre and learned that the global news media is cross-eyed badger in heat at times.

This is the nucleus of the Republican administration after the second Bush term. It is clear that Dick Cheney will not

seek the presidency; he may not even run in 2004 as vice president. Donald Rumsfeld does not want the top job either. No sitting U.S. Senator has the intestinal fortitude to run a successful campaign.

If the GOP is smart, it should focus on the "team concept" instead of a single presidential candidate. The Democrats will always focus on the glamorous, mad money raising, media pretty boy, as the frontrunner. It

worked during Bush II's campaign. He will have to work to get him re-elected.

commander.

Many presidential hopefuls will backtrack their anti-war

stances in order to get re-elected since the Operation Freedom of Iraq was too successful to ignore. There will be the career critics who now whine that Bush cannot "Win the Peace." They hope and pray for an Iraqi religious civil war. But they never talk about Clinton's Bosnia or Bubba winning the peace in that war torn country. With the public have the attention span of a gnat and the recall of an 90 year shellshocked World War II veteran, good



DEMIGODS & GENERALS

If CNN had anything to say about it, it would nominate its own resident general, Wesley Clark, for the Democratic nomination. The history of American journalism shows many instances of a media empire backing a candidate to hoist its agenda on the electorate. There has been so much instant analysis on cable television by retired generals that it makes one's head spin. Commentary, book deals and politics are the three sirens for a retired

name recognition is the key to a political future. Powell will be able to glad-handle the Washington Press corps for the interval between leaving the Cabinet and the nomination in 2008.

Each presidential election the Democrats, at least 7, scramble to be King of the Pack. But the King of the United States has apparently been bestowed on Alan Greenspan, who will never leave the Fed for the White House, because it's a demotion.