

Iraq's Good News

by

Tom Holbrook

7/1/06

Happy 4th of July folks. Each and every day I find new reasons as to why I'm one of the most blessed people on earth to be living in this great country known as the United States of America. The Bible tells us that "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." That is truly what we are... blessed of God. Let each of us reflect on that truth on the 4th and pray an extra prayer for our leaders and those brave men and women who are giving their all to protect and defend this freedom we've enjoyed for so long and is taken for granted by so many.

I thought I would take this time as we think back on the years when we were struggling to become a self governing nation ourselves, to remind everyone that we had many enemies who were fighting us tooth and nail to prevent us from reaching our goal and it took many years and much blood shed to accomplish that goal. Nothing that is as valuable as a man's freedom will be attained without struggles, bloodshed, disappointments and tears and those who think otherwise are only fooling themselves.

Iraq is a nation of over 26 Million people the greater majority of whom have never known freedom. For several generations children have been born knowing only tyranny, genocide of racial and religious groups at the behest of one man or a small group of men, and living under a threat of death if anyone should deviate from the dictums put down by those few in charge. They currently don't know how to act or react to the hope of freedom. In fact many have long given up the hope of living in a country free of bombings, shooting, beheadings, and governmental lies and corruption. Do they want freedom... of course! Do they want the killing to stop... of course! Do Iraqi mothers want their children to grow up without hatred in their hearts and with the opportunity to be educated in basic sciences, literature, world civilization and truthful history courses, and to someday graduate from college... of course they do! Folks these are people just like you are with the same needs of love, affirmation and opportunity as you do. They just have never had the availability of it like you have.

When we look at the daily news coming out of Iraq we never hear of the people's hope or the good things happening over there. All we are exposed to is the mayhem, bloodshed and human suffering with a spin so negative that we are easily frustrated and encouraged to cut and run from our commitment to these people in need of our help. Let's hear some good news!

- Did you know that 25 Iraqi students departed Iraq in January, 2005, for education under the re-established Fulbright Scholarship program with more to follow each year?

- **Did you know** as of February 2006, the Iraqi navy is operational again and has approximately 800 sailors and marines which form an Operational headquarters, two afloat squadrons, and six marine platoons?
- **Did you know** that the Iraqi Naval Fleet consists of:
 1. Five Predator Class patrol boats
 2. five Chinese-built 27-meter gunboats
 3. 24 Fast Aluminum Boats
 4. 6 Al-Uboor class patrol boats
 5. 600 sailors and officers, including 200 in the Iraqi Naval Battalion (marines) who guard the platforms
 6. AND more being built even as we write this

- **Did you know** that trained Iraqi Police as of two months ago numbered close to 80,000 and more are being trained at the rate of several thousand every 8 weeks.
- **Did you know** there are more than 1,000 building projects going on including: 364 schools; 67 public clinics; 15 hospitals; 83 railroad stations; 22 oil facilities; 93 water facilities; and over 50 new electrical facilities.
- **Did you know** millions of Iraqi children are now immunized for the first time in their lives against measles, polio and other diseases common to the area and the world.
- **Did you know** our military is receiving more and more tips from Iraqis as to the whereabouts of munitions and hiding terrorists leading to more successes in capturing and killing the terrorists fighting our troops? U.S. and Iraqi troops uncovered a massive weapons cache near Baghdad on Wednesday. The cache was largely made up of materials used to make IEDs: 142 land mines, 58 blocks of C4 explosives, approximately 8,000 feet of detonation cord, 107 fuses, 22 rocket-propelled grenades, a launcher, 59 mortars, 40 pounds of mortar propellant, four shape charges, 43 blasting caps, explosive-formed projectile materials, two gas masks, six two-way radios, multiple mortar launching tubes, maps of Baghdad and Iraq, and anti-Iraqi force literature.

The story continues:

The discovery of weapons caches, often a result of a local's tip to Iraqi or American forces, occur nearly every day in Iraq, but the May 10, 2006 discovery was particularly large.

In a press conference this week, Major General Richard Lynch, military spokesperson in Iraq, noted that tips from Iraqis have increased significantly this year. During the first eleven days of May, Iraqis had phoned in more than 1,500 phone calls. Lynch said that 98 percent of the tips contain usable intelligence. The tips have been especially useful in the fight against al Qaeda and IEDs:

Improved intelligence and increasingly capable Iraqi security forces also led to the capture or killing of more than 161 senior leaders of al-Qaida in Iraq, as well as a marked decrease in effective improvised bombs. More than 50 percent of the bombs now are found and defused before they can kill, he said.

Major Lynch also made a rather interesting statement, and I couldn't agree more:

"People want to talk about what the enemy did. But they don't talk about what the enemy couldn't do," Lynch said. "And there is a lot he couldn't do because of that increased presence."

Folks, I couldn't end with a better statement than that, right from the General's mouth... there are good things happening in Iraq. Happy 4th of July and let's continue to hang tight in Iraq and help the Iraqis have their Independence Day Celebrations of their own one day soon.

#