



## **An Unpronounceable War**

"General, what kind of training are our troops receiving prior to their arrival in the Middle East?" I asked, as we walked into the Baghdad US High Command Quarters, located in one of Saddam's palaces, or the one that has a great view of the Euphrates. I could not help admiring the lovely marble floors, the ornate columns with gold plated ornaments and the high quality of carved windows, doors and solid mahogany tables. Saddam had not spared expenses in building his many palaces and this one was one of the more modest.

The General I interviewed is a modern warrior. There is none of the old swashbuckling of old. Modern commanders no longer carry a couple of Darnak grenades attached to their suspenders. Personal weapons are out. There isn't a single military leader who struts around with a long barreled Smith and Wesson in a Texas holster in his waist or a fourteen inch jungle knife with unfriendly serrations and pronged tips attached to his thigh. They all look the same. Their caps and fatigues all match the color of the war they have been assigned to participate in.

After the customary check in, he suggested that we move to the base's PR lounge, which contains, among other things, large Television screens, two bars serving anything from Norwegian wines to mint infusions. There were at least half a dozen ping pong tables, which I surmised answered to the Forrest Gump conception of military leisure. He led me to a comfortable corner and had a colonel bring us some cold beer and some Iraqi pastry.

"This time we are being extremely careful if not obsessive about telling our troops who they are fighting"

"Interesting, General. Now, who are they fighting?"

"Actually, no one. We are trying to give them a clear idea of who is doing what to whom in Iraq and to shoot when shot at."

"Would you mind explaining that to me, sir?"

"Easy. You see, Al Zakiri Mamun, Ahmed El-Anabad and Ratko Mladic under the protection of Raschid Aban Lamad have been difficult to deal with, same as Mal Emoahnaden who is not quite in agreement with Alija Izer-Al-Jahbed especially when it comes to deployments around Al Mutahmnay, D'Yala and Quadisimayyah. All this led to the resignation of Foreign minister Muhamed Sacirbey Milhano, against the wishes of Mustafa Al Seneah Bliskethzjern. But this is a situation the Kurd Pachel Enus Grachev had foreseen, since he had been in touch with General Bulisevic and Ahmed Sisicant when the siege of Pie-Al-Remonglanas and Blotz took place. You see, the Kurds, the Shiite and the Sunis are being helpful and their favorite mullah An-Al Kozyrev and his undersecretary Salim Al Kaline have been keeping an eye on Western Iraq, Krajina and Bloscash City."

"Is that so?"

"Yes and it does not include the mess that Al Qaida initiated during their third incursion, or about the time that Petreaus appeared on the scene. Then it was worse as there were US troops to add to the target market"



"It sounds Arab to me, sir. How can you expect the troops to remember all this when they have trouble pronouncing Kucinic? What happened to commanders with names you could pronounce? I am sure the Second World War wouldn't have happened if Hitler's name had been Shickelgruber."

He laughed and said:

"Also, I want you to refute that claim about our troops not being properly equipped. I have insisted since the day I arrived that our troops be well armed and fully backed by all types of support systems. Each one of our soldiers is a Rambo and a walking showcase of space-age weaponry. They carry special transmitters in their helmets so they don't get lost, night vision glasses, laser equipped gun sights, silencers for their automatic weapons, high impact explo pills, known as grenades in the old days, armor piercing NRA Colts, the new convertible rifle that can function as anti aircraft gun, depth charge launcher, satellite antenna and number seven iron"

"Have the uniforms have changed since the Gulf War?"

"That is a good question. You have to be properly dressed to fight a war. Since the Eisenhower jacket to the Guantanamo shorts, they have been crucial in projecting the right image. The Gulf War was a unique exercise in desert operations and survival; Iraq is different."

"I did not realize that uniforms were that important"

"Modern warfare is conducted in front of Television cameras, don't forget. Besides, the CNN producers are the most demanding in the entire industry. Without them, NO WAR! For instance, the Gulf War called for the sand motif. We had a hell of a time finding the right shade for the uniforms and, worse yet, the buttons. We even had to have VELCRO made in desert-sand beige color. And the shoes! Fortunately Schwarzkopf, at the last moment noticed that the shoes weren't right so he sat down and designed them for us! That's leadership."

"How about the other conflicts since then?"

"Well, Somalia required bush type uniforms in a light weight cotton and polyester blend. Haiti was strictly jungle camouflage issues with triple soled field boots. It kept alligators at a safe distance. You see, we are prepared for any eventuality. . "

We stopped to open another can of cold Israeli beer and eat a piece of that delightful Iraqi honey pastry. He smiled satisfied and said:

"Did you know that beer originated in Iraq? This is one of the last places in Muslim countries where beer can be brewed, even though its production is rapidly declining thanks to the influence of the fundamentalist forces."

Another sip of beer and then:"Well, war is war and this one is not an easy one. But the big problem remains the difficulty everyone has with the names of the different tribes, their chieftains and some of the unpronounceable names of the locations where we are deployed. Communications is a major riddle because very few of our troops can pronounce such strange sounding names, rendered more difficult by their spelling."

"How are you coping with this problem, General?]



"Our Chief of Staff has been busy looking for a way to allow all of us to be able to distinguish names of people, titles, provinces and cities. He is adding more language experts to all our battalions."

We got up as it was time for me to catch the helicopter to the airport. I said:

"Have a nice war, General. Incidentally, what is your name?"

"Dvortsian Albemarle Glorstkjwenauschet and I report to General Petroleum, sorry, Petraeus. "

**THE END**

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