

# Welcome to Allawi's

**By David Rubinson**

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**W**elcome to Allawi's White House Grill Room. My name is AYAD, and I will be your server. Our menu tonight features our famous Bullshit Buffet, a miraculously mendacious menu of meretriciously delicious cuisine.

But first, we do have a few specials I'd like to tell you about, OK? For appetizers, we have Abu al la Ghraib, which is fresh young Sunni, handcuffed and stuffed with vegetables, and roasted in a plastic bag.

Also, Nachos Najaf, small tortilla-shaped like sacred tombstones, broken apart in sand, and served with a Tajik Guacamole, alongside one of famous specialties, Haliburton Halibut Dick, carefully boned.

Our whole simmered Sadr is persecuted for generations, carefully sauteed in crude oil and left in the road to dry. It is served sizzling hot on a silver platter, with seared Cleric.

Fresh Kurd curds are first lured and then betrayed, cured in brine and hogwash, with betrayed beets on the side.

Our Vitello Sistani is cooked for 60 years, shipped to London, split down the middle and sewn back together, and then flown to Fallujah and hung out to dry.

We also have a lovely Head of Hostage in an Orange Suit, severed and lightly sauced.

For dessert our Commander in Chief suggests Shiite Souffle, a sweet and sour bouille, folded into RPG shells and then left to rise to ten times its original size.

For those of you on low carb diets, We have Chickenhawk a la George. A farm bred over-privileged chicken raised on Chitos and beer, sent away for processing, lubricated with vodka and its nose stuffed, and immersed in oil. Served very very well done.

Well, there you have them.

Of course, you are welcome to look at our regular menu – below- and make your choices.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to be very gullible.

Remember our motto: If you eat this, you'll swallow anything.

I'll be right back to take your order.

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## **George's Man In Baghdad**

President Bush told reporters yesterday that "what's important for the American people

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to hear [about Iraq] is reality. And the reality is right here in the form of the Prime Minister.” But Americans hoping to gain a new perspective on “reality” in Iraq should have been sorely disappointed by Prime Minister Ayad Allawi’s statements, first to Congress and then at the Rose Garden with the president. Rather than offering a serious assessment of the challenges he faces in defeating an ever-growing insurgency in Iraq, Allawi largely parroted, often almost word-for-word, optimistic Bush administration talking points. Unfortunately, daily attacks on U.S. troops, the beheadings of foreigners, the growing list of cities under insurgent control and the increasing chance the security situation will compromise the January elections all serve to “undercut the verbal sunshine produced in the White House Rose Garden.”

### **MISLEADING CLAIM 1: WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS:**

President Bush said yesterday, “These have been months of steady progress” in Iraq. Allawi echoed the president, reminding Congress not to forget “the progress we are making.” Both pointed to the building of new schools and hospitals as proof of “progress,” but neither mentioned that the security situation has gotten so bad the U.S. has had to divert crucial reconstruction funds from water, sewage, transportation, electricity and other projects to pay for increased security, leaving many Iraqis “without the crucial services that generally form the backbone of a stable and functioning democracy.” Meanwhile, the security situation continues to deteriorate, with “[l]arge swaths of Iraq” remaining outside the control of the interim government. The continuing violence “has overshadowed signs of progress and put a damper on the prospect of democratic elections.”

### **MISLEADING CLAIM 2: ELECTIONS WILL DEFINITELY GO FORWARD**

Asked whether he believed, “given the situation on the ground in Fallujah and other northern cities in the Sunni Triangle, that elections are possible in four months,” President Bush said, “I do, because the Prime Minister told me they are.” Neither Bush nor Allawi provided evidence for their belief – perhaps because there isn’t any. On the same day Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq’s most powerful Shiite leader, “threatened to withdraw his support for the elections,” and just days after U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan suggested “elections may have to be delayed because of security concerns,” U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld “raised the possibility that some areas of Iraq might be excluded” from voting in January. “Let’s say you tried to have an election and you could have it in three-quarters or four-fifths of the country. But in some places you couldn’t because the violence was too great,” Rumsfeld said at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing. “Well, so be it. Nothing’s perfect in life.”

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### **MISLEADING CLAIM 3: INSURGENCY: A "TINY MINORITY"**

Bush referred to the insurgency on Wednesday as “a handful of people who are willing to kill in order to stop the process.” Allawi said the problem in Iraq was a “tiny minority . . . who will kill anyone, destroy anything, to prevent” Iraq from achieving its goals, adding that 15 of Iraq’s 18 provinces are safe enough to hold elections tomorrow. The Bush administration’s own data indicates otherwise. According to the Defense Department, there were more attacks per day on U.S. forces in August than during any month since Bush’s “mission accomplished” appearance in May 2003, and preliminary analysis suggests troops “are being attacked across a wider area of Iraq than ever before.” Meanwhile, September threatens to become one of the deadliest months of the war for U.S. troops. Several reports indicate Iraq “has become increasingly mottled with areas . . . where militants appear to operate with impunity, running cities that even some U.S. military officers label ‘no-go’ zones.”

### **MISLEADING CLAIM 4: THE SOUTH IS SAFE**

Allawi emphasized that most of northern and southern Iraq are safe enough to hold elections tomorrow, but “He might want to check in with the British troops in the ‘tranquil’ south he described.” British soldiers at a base in al-Ammara, considered a year ago to be one of the more peaceful parts of Iraq, told the BBC that last month alone they suffered 853 separate attacks, “the most frequent combat experienced by a British army unit since the Korean war.”

### **MISLEADING CLAIM 5: WORLD IS SAFER WITH SADDAM GONE**

President Bush likes to say, “We are safer – we are safer and the world is better off because Saddam is sitting in a prison cell.” Allawi borrowed the president’s words for a big applause line on Thursday: “My friends, today we are better off, you are better off and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein,” he said. As Jim Fallows points out in this month’s Atlantic Monthly, “the United States succeeded in removing Saddam Hussein, but at this cost: The first front in the war on terror, Afghanistan, was left to fester, as attention and money were drained toward Iraq.” North Korea and Iran have “surged ahead” with nuclear programs. America’s military power has been diluted and “Because of outlays for Iraq, the United States cannot spend \$150 billion for other defensive purposes.” And, “Worst of all, the government-wide effort to wage war in Iraq crowded out efforts to design a broader strategy against Islamic extremists and terrorists; to this day the Administration has articulated no comprehensive long-term plan.”

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### **REALITY: WORLD IS LESS SAFE**

Moreover, the world is demonstrably less safe than it was before America invaded Iraq. As a July report by the British House of Commons showed, the “Coalition’s failure to bring law and order to parts of Iraq” turned Iraq into a “battle ground” for al Qaeda. And the International Institute for Strategic Studies says the war in Iraq has swelled the ranks of al Qaeda, focusing the energies and resources of the terrorists, while diluting those of the global counter-terrorism coalition. James Fallows writes that among national security officials, “One view prevails: [the war] has increased the threats America faces, and has reduced the military, financial, and diplomatic tools with which we can respond.”