

“Shoot first, answer questions later ... maybe”

By Chris Hendershot

Based on the events of 16 September 2007¹

HONKING HORNS, REVVING ENGINES, SQUEAKY BRAKES.

Fade in:

EXT. NISOUR SQUARE, BAGHDAD, IRAQ – MID-DAY

Birds-eye view of sedans, taxis, motorcycles, trucks and passenger buses entering and exiting Nisour Square on Damascus, Abu-Ghraib and Yarmouk Streets.

INT. BEARCAT ARMoured VEHICLE

Driver point-of-view (POV). Frenzied and foreboding feeling as driver frantically scans for opening in traffic.

Passenger in Vehicle (unseen)
(over sound of engine)
Potential contact on left!!

EXT. SWIRLING DUST

Engine revs and view pulls back to reveal the four vehicles of the Blackwater Tactical Support Team (TST) 23 entering Nisour Square from the southwest. Vehicles take-up defensive positions around square covering all entrance and exit points.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE

Middle aged male rider enters the square from the northeast.

INT. OLIVE GREEN CAR

Middle aged male driver enters the square from the northwest.

INT. WHITE TRUCK

Middle aged man (driving) speaking with another middle aged man (passenger). A white sedan is visible through windshield two cars ahead and one lane over.

INT. WHITE SEDAN

¹ Information on the events of 16 September 2007 is drawn from Raghavan, 2007; Staff Writer/Washington Post, 2007; Hanner, 2007; Glanz & Rubin, 2007.

Mother (driving) and son (passenger-seat) discuss plans for remainder of day. Men in tan uniforms and black-helmets become visible through windshield.

EXT. BLINDING SUN

Gun-sight POV of white sedan.

TST Member 1
White sedan approaching...

TST Member 2
Hostile?

TST Member 1
It's not stopping...

TST Member 3
Engage!

Eruption of gunfire. Slow-motion pan of TST members firing M4 and M240B automatic weapons, a M203 grenade launcher and throwing stun and smoke grenades.

Bullets slam into windshield of white sedan. Son (passenger) killed instantly as a bullet passes through his head. Mother (driver) accepts² numerous rounds to the body and slumps over. Sedan catches fire and begins to cremate the now dead mother and son.

EXT. SMOKE, MUZZLE FLASHES, SOUND OF LEAD IMPACTING WITH STEEL, GLASS, ASPHALT AND FLESH.

Birds-eye-view of square. People fleeing in all directions on foot and in vehicles from centre of square. TST members continue engaging perceived threats.

INT. WHITE TRUCK.

Bullets creep back from white sedan (now engulfed in flames) into black car immediately in front of truck. Passenger, with a look of sheer panic, exits truck and instantly receives rounds to leg and midsection. Falls to the ground and loses consciousness. Driver, watches passenger fall, begins to exit vehicle and is intercepted by rounds to the head and back. Drops to the ground, dead.

EXT. NORTHEAST QUADRAINT OF SQUARE

Motorcycle rider is felled by numerous bullets to the chest.

² Although by no means consensually.

EXT. NORTHWEST QUARDRAINT OF SQUARE

Bullets pierce windshield of olive-green car, striking and killing the driver. View pulls back to gun-sight POV of olive-green car.

TST Member 5
(over gun-fire)
Cease-fire! Cease-fire! STOP FUCKIN SHOOTING!!

EXT. NISOUR SQUARE, BAGHDAD, IRAQ – A FEW MINUTES LATER.

View scans clockwise around the square. Smoke from burning cars and smoke-grenades distort the view. Blackwater TST 23 departs the scene. People begin to emerge from whatever cover they could find. At least 20 people clutch at wounds, eyes scanning for any potential aid. At least 17 bodies are motionless, save for the flow of what was once inside into the world out-there.

END.

How is this performance to be interpreted? Or more precisely, what interpretations are necessary to foreground in order to prevent a repeat of this performance? Given the ‘circumstances’ in which an “[e]stimated 8-10 persons fired from multiple nearby locations, with some aggressors dressed in civilian apparel and others in Iraqi Police uniforms” (Hanner, 2007) the only interpretation that matters for Blackwater is that TST 23 acted appropriately because they were acting in self-defence. As such, “Blackwater regrets any loss of life but this convoy was violently attacked by armed insurgents, not civilians, and our people [sic] did their job to defend human life (Iraq kicks out US security firm after fatal shooting, 2007).” Similarly, as only five of the twenty members of TST 23 discharged their weapons, TST 23 “acted appropriately while operating in a very complex war zone” (Prince, 2007, p. 5-6). To the extent that these ‘circumstances’ are indeed true and that no “kind of egregious, malicious, intentional wrong behavior [sic]” occurred on September 16th (Prince quoted in Goldiner, 2007), the interpretation proffered by Blackwater that TST 23 acted legitimately is back-upped by the presence of self-defence provisions in at least two state-sanctioned documents that governed the operations of personal security details (PSDs) operating in Iraq in 2007.

The first of these documents is the *US State Department Mission Firearms Policy for Iraq* which contains the provision that the employ of deadly force “is permissible when there is no safe alternative to using such force and without the use of deadly force, the individual or others would face imminent and grave danger (U.S.A. v. J.P. Ridgeway, 2008, p.3).” The second document is the Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA) *Memorandum 17 Annex A: Use of Force* (2004) which more clearly articulates that “**NOTHING IN THESE RULES LIMITS YOUR INHERENT RIGHT TO TAKE ACTION NECESSARY TO DEFEND YOURSELF** (emphasis in original).” Subsection two of *Annex A* further elaborates, “You may use NECESSARY FORCE, up to and including deadly force against persons in the following circumstances” self-defence, the defence of principals and to protect civilians.³ Therefore, to

³ Although not signed until December 2007 the *Memorandum of Agreement between the Department of Defense and the Department of State on USG Private Security Contractors* (2007), reaffirms that “[PMSCs] always retain the

accept that TST 23 acted in self-defence is thereby to legitimize their insofar as such actions fall within the self-defence provisions of the most relevant governing documents on the operations of PMSCs/PSDs in Iraq. Interestingly, the assertion that self-defence is an “inherit right” in *Annex A* effectively renders both the *US Mission Firearms Policy* and *Annex A* redundant. Accepting the Hobbesian interpretation that right to defend oneself is a non-transferable right⁴ means that state-sanction of the use of deadly force in the defence of oneself is not necessary to interpret the actions of TST 23 as appropriate. As a non-transferable right or ‘god-given’ predisposition of humanity⁵ the ability to defend oneself does not require any form of sanction⁶ regardless of the temporal, geographic, political and economic circumstances that produce circumstances in which defending oneself through the use of deadly force is deemed necessary – such as those political-economic factors that brought Blackwater to Iraq in the first place. Troublingly, prevention of similar performances is therefore incumbent on alleviating the conditions and circumstances in which the defence of oneself is necessary and thanks to the ahistorical interpretations of Hobbes by proponents of a Realist approach to the study of International Relations/Security Studies a superficially convincing argument can be made that such alleviation is improbable – if not impossible, but more on this in a moment.

Unfortunately⁷ the credibility of the interpretation of Blackwater is undercut by a host of accusations that Blackwater personnel regularly act with malicious intent. Although the bribery and weapons smuggling accusations mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation certainly raise some questions about credibility, a memorandum distributed to members of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (HCOGR) on October 1, 2007 provides even more fertile ground for skepticism. Present in this memorandum is the revelation that between January 2005 and September 2007 Blackwater contractors discharged their weapons 195 times during “escalation of force incidents” (Majority Staff, 2007, p.1). In over 80 per cent of these escalation of force incidents Blackwater contractors fired first, typically firing from a moving vehicle, which resulted in 162 incidents of property damage and 16 Iraqi casualties including the deaths of unarmed people (Ibid., 2). The memorandum also contains numerous reasons that Blackwater personnel have had their contracts terminated including weapons related incidents, aggressive or violent behaviour and failure to report or lying about an incident (Ibid., 13). As noted in the memorandum, “The most common cause for termination was weapons-related incidents, which included two terminations for inappropriately firing at Iraqis, one termination for threatening Iraqis with a firearm, 12 terminations for negligent or accidental weapons discharges, and one termination for proposing to sell weapons to the Iraqi government (Ibid.)” Add anecdotal claims by U.S. Army personnel that Blackwater contractors are “immature shooters and have very quick trigger fingers. Their tendency is to shoot first and ask questions later” (quoted in Raghavan & Ricks, 2007) and the credibility of Blackwater and TST 23 is seriously undermined.

inherent right to exercise self-defense in response to a hostile act or demonstrated hostile intent. [PMSCs] are permitted to use deadly force in defense of others when there is a reasonable belief of imminent risk of death or serious bodily harm. (2)

⁴ Appearing in paragraph 8, Chapter XIV of the *Leviathan*, “For it is a voluntary act, and of the voluntary acts of every man the object is some *good to himself*. And therefore there be some rights which no man can be understood by any words or other signs to have abandoned or transferred. As, first, a man cannot lay down the right of resisting them that assault him by force, to take away his life, because he cannot be understood to aim thereby at any good to himself (emphasis in original).”

⁵ Appearing in paragraph 88, Chapter IX of the *First Treatise*, “The first and strongest desire God Planted in Men, and wrought into the very Principles of their Nature being that of Self-preservation”.

⁶ Save for the recognition that the members of TST 23 can be said to be ‘human-beings’.

⁷ Read sarcastically!

While “[t]hese prior bad acts are relevant to [establishing that the TST 23 shooters likely] intended to kill or seriously injure the Iraqi civilians that they fired upon at Nisour Square” (Risen, 2009) Iraqi government, FBI, *Washington Post* and *New York Times* investigations into the actions of TST 23 all concretely conclude that the TST 23 shooters did not discharge their weapons in self-defense. Citing statements from three eyewitnesses who observed the actions of TST 23 from a rooftop overlooking Nisour Square, Glanz (2007) reports that none of the eyewitnesses “observed [any] gunfire that could have provoked shooting by the Blackwater” contractors. Claims that TST 23 did not receive small arms fire are further corroborated by U.S. military officials who reported to both the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* that only NATO standard ammunition casings, such as the 5.56 mm round used by M4 and M16 assault weapons, were found in the immediate area of the Square (Ibid.; Raghavan & White, 2007). Raghavan and White (2007) also quote U.S. Military Lt. Col. Mike Tarsa⁸ as saying that “It appeared to me [that Iraqi driven vehicles] were fleeing the scene, when they were engaged. It had every indication of an excessive shooting.”

The Iraqi investigation led by the Interior Ministry⁹ concluded that TST 23 did not act in self-defence and thus the actions of TST 23 must be considered a “deliberate crime against civilians” (quoted in Glanz & Rubin, 2007). Simplifying the findings of the investigation, Iraq’s Minister of Defence Abdul Qader Mohammed Jassim makes it patently clear that the actions of TST 23 were unprovoked, “Not even a brick was thrown at [the Blackwater contractors]” (Ibid.). Released almost two months after the Iraqi investigation, findings from the FBI investigation conclude that 14 of the 17 Iraqi’s shot and killed by TST 23 were “unjustified” and were therefore in violation of U.S. State Department rules regarding the application of deadly force (Johnston & Broder, 2007). Whereas CPA Order 17 protected the members of TST 23 from facing criminal prosecution for their actions in Iraqi courts, the findings of the FBI investigation permitted the US Justice Department to begin criminal proceedings in US District Court. In December 2008, 6 members of TST 23 were indicted on charges of voluntary manslaughter, attempting to commit manslaughter and discharging a firearm while committing a crime of violence. Five of the contractors subsequently pleaded not-guilty with the sixth pleading guilty to lesser charges in exchange for testimony against the other 5 (Ramstack, 2009).¹⁰

With only Blackwater and staunch conservative commentators maintaining that TST 23 acted appropriately in the weeks following September 16th, two interpretations of the locus of blame now become relevant. The first of these interpretations, proffered most readily by the US State Department, is that the process is at fault. While official apologies and expressions of regret for the loss of life by then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice work to assuage the ‘emotions’, assurances that “prompt measures need to be taken to strengthen the coordination, oversight, and accountability aspects of the State Department’s security practices in Iraq (Boswell et. al., 2007, p. 3)”¹¹ locate the problem-solution-method-of-prevention in the management of PSDs operations in Iraq. As a management issue enhancing coordination, oversight and accountability of PSD operations first required formation of a panel of experts tasked with the purpose of conducting a “serious, probing and comprehensive” review (Ibid.).

⁸ Tarsa arrived at Nisour Square 25 minutes after the shooting had ceased.

⁹ The Interior Ministry is responsible for issuing licenses that allow PMSCs to operate in Iraq.

¹⁰ The case against 5 of the contractors was dismissed in December 2010 with U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina noting that the US Justice Department “improperly used evidence to build the case (Appuzzo, 2010).” Judge Urbina did not comment on the appropriateness or lack thereof of the actions of the contractors.

¹¹ The remainder of the quotation reads “...in order to reduce the likelihood that future incidents will occur that adversely affect the overall US mission in Iraq (Boswell et. al., 2007, p. 3).”

Included with this review was the authority to determine the necessary steps that the US State Department would need to implement in order to restore confidence in the operations of contracted PSDs in Iraq. After “extensive” research that included visits to Iraq the panel release a report that contained 19 recommendations. Some of the more interesting of these 19 recommendations include: a) developing a clear legal basis for holding contractors accountable under U.S. law, b) tightening the ground rules for the use of deadly force¹², c) enhancing contractor awareness of Iraqi culture, d) installing video and audio recording equipment in all PSD vehicles, and e) establishing an investigative “Go-Team” that could respond immediately to any incident in which a weapon is discharged (Ibid.). I consider these recommendations to be interesting because it is clear that some serious deficiencies in the management of PSDs existed in Iraq in 2007; however, the phrasing of these recommendations and the language of the report as a whole ensures that the prevention of future Nisour Square ‘incidents’ is only an issue of better management practices. Moreover, as Sean McCormack, the spokesperson for the State Department in 2007 is quoted as saying “[The State Department wants] to make sure that [American diplomats] are protected, but they are protected in such a way that we are not undermining what we’re trying to achieve with our larger efforts in Iraq, as well as elsewhere around the world” (Harper, 2007). Ironically, by finding fault in the process the State Department takes all the blame for the Nisour Square incident, while simultaneously ensuring that broader US foreign and defence policies are not called into question. In another and expanded phrasing, the blame the process interpretation permits a ‘critical’ evaluation of PSD operations, however, interrogation of the imbrications and contradictions of the usage of technologies of destruction, the satisfaction of US foreign/defence policy desires and the material and discursive (re)production of the (supposedly) inherent right to defend oneself are evacuated from this evaluation.

The second most relevant interpretation is to find fault with the practitioner typified by the expression of an Iraqi government official that “Blackwater has no respect for the Iraqi people. They consider Iraqis like animals, although actually I think they may have more respect for animals (Fainaru, 2007).” Acting on this utter disdain for the utter disdain of Blackwater, the Iraqi government immediately called for the expulsion of Blackwater from Iraq following the shootings at Nisour Square.¹³ Iraqi government condemnation is/was itself buttressed by and/or buttresses the more than understandable anger and revulsion expressed towards Blackwater by the survivors and relatives of the Iraqis who were killed by the members of TST 23. For instance, an Iraqi police officer who was directing traffic at Nisour Square on September 16th reclaims the discourses of the American War Terror for himself by suggesting that the Blackwater contractors “became the terrorists” that day (Karadsheh and Duke, 2007). Raheem Salman, who was shot four times, concurs with the sentiment that TST 23 “became the terrorists” by contending that the only acceptable form of justice for the Blackwater contractors “is that they be executed” (quoted in Victims of Blackwater attack demand justice, 2007). In a wrongful death lawsuit filed on behalf of Talib Mutlaq Deewan (wounded) and the families of

¹² Interestingly this recommendation also contains the provision that “the U.S. Mission Firearms Policy should be revised to specify, without limiting the inherent right to take action necessary for self-defense ... (Boswell et. al., 2007, p.9).”

¹³ Despite the initial efforts of the Iraqi government to expel Blackwater, intervention by the US State Department forced a change in tone with Iraqi government officials moving from away from outright condemnation. ‘Informed’ by the State Department that an immediate expulsion of Blackwater would create a “security gap because most of the embassies and most of the foreign organizations that are working in Iraq” rely on Blackwater PSDs, the Iraqi government quietly backed away from an immediate expulsion (Rubin and Kramer, 2007).

Himoud Saed Atban, Usam Fadhil Abbass and Oday Ismail Ibraheem (killed) the sanitized “most-serious” and “high-profile” incident labels symbolic of the blame the process interpretation are replaced with designations of the events of September 16th as a “senseless slaughter” and a “massacre” (Raghavan and Whit2, 2007).¹⁴

Given the less than privileged position occupied by most of the Iraqis directly affected by the actions of TST 23, the most prominent proponents of the blame the practitioner interpretation are/were the Chair of the HCOGR Democratic Representative Henry Waxman and journalist/author Jeremy Scahill. It was Henry Waxman’s staff who prepared the above cited memorandum which uncovered the statistics regarding escalation of force incidents and reasons for contract termination of Blackwater personnel. It was also Henry Waxman’s questioning of Erik Prince during HCOGR hearings in October 2007 that opened the flood gates of popular media examination into the history, intentions and political connections of Blackwater and Erik Prince.¹⁵ As noted throughout this dissertation Jeremy Scahill can be considered the single-most dogged detractor of Blackwater and therefore it should come as no surprise that his name reappears in this discussion of blaming the practitioner. Suffice it to say that Scahill contributes and or is featured in 4 of the top 5 results when searching “Nisour Square Massacre” on google.ca.

Undoubtedly the condemnation of Blackwater by Iraqis, American Democratic politicians and media personalities forced the hands of those people and institutions committed to the blame the process interpretation. Without the blame the practitioner response there certainly would not have been as swift a review and alteration of the management of PSDs in Iraq and without any changes in operating procedures it is unlikely that the precipitous decrease in the number deadly force incidents from a minimum of 4 incidents per month in 2007 to only one incident for all of 2008 would have occurred (Office of Inspector General, 2008). Aside from these promising statistics the effect of the blaming the practitioner interpretation on the prevention of similar performances can be considered mixed – at best. For instance in January 2009 the Iraqi Interior Ministry declared that it would not renew the operating license of Blackwater once it came due. The US State Department followed suit and did not renew the World Personal Protective Services contract with Blackwater thereby bringing an official end to land-based PSD operations for Blackwater in Iraq in May 2009. Following the announcement of their imminent expulsion from Iraq, Blackwater Worldwide announced that it was changing its name to Xe. Speaking on behalf of the newly renamed company Anne Tyrell asserts that “We’ve taken the company to a place where it is no longer accurately described as Blackwater (Hedgpeth, 2009).” The company formerly known as Blackwater also changed the names of its non-PSD entities from Blackwater Airships to Guardian Flight Systems, Blackwater Target Systems to GSD Manufacturing and the Blackwater Lodge and Training Centre to the U.S. Training Centre (Ibid.). This rebranding was soon followed by the March 2009 announcement that Erik Prince would be stepping down as President and CEO of Xe/Blackwater. Despite these calculated setbacks, Xe continues to bid for and fulfill US government contracts for operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan (Xe contender for key Afghan work, 2010).

¹⁴ Once it became reasonably clear that TST 23 did not fire their weapons in self-defence popular media coverage began referring to the events of September 16 as the Nisour Square Massacre. Although by no means the most precise of research tools, searching “Nisour Square Massacre” on google.ca produces about 307 000 results.

¹⁵ For edited coverage of the interaction between Waxman and Prince see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtXqOSk66ks>.

Perhaps more significantly for the discussion at hand, blaming the practitioner did not alter the US State Department's usage of contracted PSDs to protect American diplomats around the globe and with the signing of the Montreaux Document by the US and nineteen other countries in 2008, the application of deadly force so long as it is in self/other-defence is now a fixed feature in one of the only international documents to specifically address better management practices of the operations of PMSCs. This is not to suggest that condemnation of Xe/Blackwater is a meaningless reaction. It should go without saying that the most immediate blame for the Nisour Square Massacre lies with those members of TST 23 who opened fire on September 16th. Rather, my hesitation with a blame the practitioner interpretation is that I fail to see how such an interpretation drastically alters the material-discursive space by and through which the initial performance of TST 23 (was allowed to) occur(s). Indeed in many instances Blackwater's condemners resort to and thereby reinforce the very structures that permit-place-cast PSDs in situations/roles similar to that of TST 23. Similar to my concerns with the blame the process interpretation, once the hyperbole and rhetoric is stripped-away the blaming the practitioner interpretation appears to be most readily concerned with the legal prosecution of the culpable members of TST 23 and the institution of more virile oversight and accountability provisions aimed at ending contractor immunity in Iraq. Making the practitioners better by making the processes better misses what the performance of TST 23 in Nisour Square is about.

Put esoterically the performance of TST 23 on September 16th in Nisour Square is about the successful transfer on kinetic energy down-range, the catastrophic failure of a prophylactic and the mundane enactment of one of America's favourite pastimes. In translation, my interpretation of the performance of TST 23 requires lines of questioning that do not lock the performance of TST 23 into the egregious exceptionality that is Erik Prince and Blackwater, the deference to militarized-liberal power structures that is the pursuit of accountability and the depoliticized expectation that is the inherit right to defend oneself. As hinted at above, my interpretation is interested in interrogating the relationships between: 1) the usage of destructive technologies or as is popular parlance amongst the weapons manufacturers responsible for arming PSDs with increasingly destructive technologies the successful transfer of kinetic energy down range¹⁶, 2) the continued satisfaction of the foreign/defence policy desires of the American Body-Politic through the protection offered by (contracted) PSDs or how, and paying homage to Cynthia Weber, PSDs function as a prophylactic that allows the American Body-Politic to experience the joy of penetrating any number of Other-Body-Politics without fear of being infected with something that would hamper the joy of conquest, and 3) the discursive and material tactics deployed by the self-defence industry in the US in order to (re)produce self-defence as an inherit, non-transferable or god-given right or how protecting oneself has developed into such a preeminent pastime in America that to question it is tantamount to heresy or treason – depending on where the questioner resides.

My desire to interpret the performance of TST 23 through the relationships between sex, guns and self-defence, for short, moves from my annoyance with some unexamined contradictions in the circumstances that permitted, precipitated and will continue to permit and precipitate similar performances to that of the one put on by TST 23.¹⁷ One of the more

¹⁶ For regular encounters such with such utterances viewing episodes of 3 and 5 from Season 3 of *Future Weapons* is a must.

¹⁷ A cynical interpretation of my annoyance would simply suggest that is obvious why certain contradictions go unaddressed. However, to be clear, I am finished with cynicism and so if it seems obvious why the contractions I am about to are unexamined, then we should obviously do something about that!

perturbing of these contradictions is that American popular and governmental reaction to the performance of TST 23 very much resembled reactions to mass shootings occurring on American soil. However, unlike in response to domestic mass shootings no where in the response to this foreign mass shooting did the words ‘gun control’ appear. As gun control/ownership is currently one of the most divisive political issues in the US, it is not surprising that politicians and bureaucrats made no mention of this phrase. What is perturbing about the avoidance of ‘gun control’ is that that is exactly what both the managers and condemners ended up focusing on in their responses to the performance of TST 23. Fragmentation ammunition, offensive vs. defensive weapons, more thorough background checks for contractors, better training, more stringent regulations on the use of deadly force, identification numbers for all PSD vehicles all of these issues and recommendations are present in the response to Nisour Square and all of these issues and recommendations are present in American gun control debates. Equally absent were any suggestions that if only a few law-abiding Iraqis armed with guns, or ‘Sheepdogs’ as Soldier of Fortune Magazine (2010) refers to their American counterparts, had been present at Nisour Square this whole situation could have been avoided. Indeed there were no hyperbolic calls for CPA Order 3¹⁸ to be repealed so as to allow Iraqis to carry and purchase assault weapons like their American counterparts had been able to do with expiration of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban in 2004. Of course the easy solution to this contradiction is to acknowledge that even though major combat operations had ended over 4 years prior, gun control frames of reference do not apply to Iraq because as Erik Prince revealed above Iraq remained a “complex war” zone in 2007. As will be discussed in more detail further on in this chapter this alignment of foreign with war and domestic with crime/rights is not only troubled by the expansion of war into all facets of human-life thanks to the prosecution of the American War on Terror, but also by the war-like/besieged texture typical of the advertisements for the American self-defence industry.

A second contradiction comes from the above comment made by US State Department spokesperson Sean McCormick. What is troubling about Sean’s comment regarding the to need ensure that American diplomats are protected without jeopardizing the objectives of these American diplomats and the appearance of similar assertions in the *Report of the Secretary of State’s Panel on Personal Protective Services in Iraq* is both the comments and the report were precipitated by the death of 17 Iraqis, yet no where is there any mention of actually making a Iraqi citizens a pivotal part of the decision-making process to reform the management processes of PSDs. Rather than interpreting the Nisour Square Massacre as moment in which to question how the pursuit of American foreign policy objectives is what may have led to the Massacre in the first place¹⁹, McCormick’s comments reveal a disturbingly narcissistic interpretation. As Weber (1999) argues with the Caribbean Basin, Iraq must therefore been seen to function as a screen upon which the American-Body Politic can project whatever self-righteous image of itself it wants. Consequently, rather than taking Nisour Square as a moment in which to address the expectation that the only value of Other-Body Politics is to passively reflect the whatever image of America that the American Body-Politic demands, McCormick’s comments only serve to reinforce that Nisour Square represented a moment when the American Body-Politic noticed that

¹⁸ As the second line of Order 3 reads, “Recognizing that weapons control is necessary in order to ensure a secure environment for the people of Iraq and to promote public order and safety”. Retrieved from http://www.cpa-iraq.org/regulations/20031231_CPAORD3_REV_AMD_.pdf.

¹⁹ Blackwater would not have been in Iraq in the same capacity as it was in September 2007 if the US State Department had not followed the US Military into Iraq in March 2003.

its clothes/hair-style were going out of fashion. In this sense the Iraqi government official who condemned Blackwater for treating Iraqi's worse than animals was on to something as Iraqi's now appear to be little more than non-sentient reflecting objects.

The last contradiction I want to foreground appears in the above statement that while Blackwater regrets the loss of life at Nisour Square, TST 23 was only doing what was necessary to "defend human life". Not wanting to delve into the utterly ridiculous hypothetical scenarios used by moral philosophers in order to escape the contradiction of taking a life to save a life (see Wasserman, 1987; Thomson, 1991; Gorr 1990) let me bring this discussion, or what some will no doubt call a rant, to a close by saying as succinctly as possible: to accept that self-defence is a non-transferable right also requires acceptance that humanity's essential characteristic is to compete, to fight. Accepting that by god, nature or Hobbes that humans are essentially fighters than it must be acknowledged that: it, that being TST 23 engagements with whatever targets/people they deemed necessary to shoot, was never a 'fair' fight. And as I intend to make clear in the remainder of this chapter when it comes to sex, guns and self-defence this is the only type of 'fight' American politicians, military strategists, arms manufacturers, self-defence trainers, concealed-carriers and open-carriers want to and are willing to participate in.

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