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Meeting Resistance (2007)



★★★★☆
 Director: [Molly Bingham, Steve Connors](#),
 Starring: [Documentary film](#) with interviews with Iraqi citizens
 Length: 84 minutes
 Rated: NR

Why They Fight
 by Amber Khan
 reviewed: 2007-10-19

Remember that scene in "Red Dawn," when the men are rounded up and held in a [football stadium](#) turned detention facility. The dad knowing his death is likely commands his sons with a war cry, "Boys, Avenge Me!" Drying their tears, the dutiful Patrick Swayze, C. Thomas Howell and their football cohorts start off to form a guerilla network and begin planting roadside bombs to drive out the Soviets.

Whether or not you liked "Red Dawn," it asked a very simple question of us Americans: If we were invaded by a foreign occupier would we resist and how? Would you supply food, provide a safe haven, give money, or stock ammo?

That very question is being posed to everyday Iraqis in the streets and neighborhoods throughout the country and many are answering that call. "Meeting Resistance" is a captivating [documentary](#) that introduces you to the everyday Iraqis in the neighborhood of Adhamiya in Baghdad who are providing materials, spiritual and financial support to a resistance movement that is targeting U.S. troops.

The co-directors Molly Bingham and Steve Connors are two free-lance journalists who were on the ground in Iraq before the U.S. military offensive was launched in 2003. Shortly after the U.S. invasion and President Bush's declaration of victory, the directors began to witness how the insurgency on the ground was far more intense and different than what was being reported in the US media. Specifically, they questioned the conventional wisdom in Washington that a defeated Republican Guard and foreign fighters fueled the guerilla warfare.

This is the only documentary on the war, that I'm aware of, that focuses exclusively on what drives the opposition – this is not a debate about the legitimacy of the war and, therefore, only includes the voices of Iraqis. "Meeting Resistance" gives you a first hand look at why everyday Iraqis are joining a sophisticated guerilla movement determined to destabilize and drive out the US presence in Iraq. The directors make hard to ignore the obvious question: Can this kind of resistance ever be defeated and if not, what and how do we bring an end to this chapter of failed neo-con inspired "democracy building?"

If you think street fighters in Iraq are irrational religious lunatics that hate Americans, think again. "Meeting Resistance" introduces us to those characters in their own voices. They are complex and not the caricatures of Bin Laden followers we see on the evening news or in grainy [videos](#). The wife the imam the soldier the foreigner the traveler and the teacher

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...grating [documentary](#). The film, the music, the action, the religion, the hatred and the tension all share their journey and in their voices helping us to better understand their motivation and rationale for helping the insurgency.

The cinematography transports you to Iraq and you feel like you are on the other-side. Watching our soldiers and the scenes from Abu-Gharib through the eyes of everyday Iraqis is provocative. But I tried to resist the emotional grab and tried to hold on to a question that I personally wanted answered: What about the innocent Iraqis that are being killed, and how could they rationalize the violence that claims so many of their own?

Towards the end of the [film](#) my question was answered and it was a sobering reminder of their focus and desire for victory. The soldier tells us that the recent shift in strategy from random gunfights to the use of sophisticated I.E.D's (improvised explosive devices) was an intentional effort to reduce civilian death and focus on their target – US troops.

It is important to note what this [movie](#) is not about; it does not weigh the merits of the U.S. invasion or debate the decision to topple Saddam. Rather, it plainly focuses upon the everyday members of the Iraqi resistance.

Finally, the notion that Iraq is in the midst of a civil war between Sunnis and Shia's is also plainly challenged. Instead, you are introduced to countrymen who insist that they are united in their anger towards occupiers who they suspect fuel sectarian violence and tensions by attacking mosques and shrines.

What you hear will make you think long and hard about our perceptions about Muslims and fundamentally how different are we from the Iraqis. The pain and suffering, humiliation and sense of violation they feel are profound and so is their faith and belief that their actions are a justified struggle of resistance that will be rewarded.

It reminded me of when I watched "Red Dawn" back in the 80s and how I imagined what I would do if our country was invaded by Soviet communists -- could I sit still and watch without resisting? "Meeting Resistance" will make you think about our perceptions about Arabs and Muslims, and fundamentally make you ask how different are we from them.

Amber Khan

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