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Today

Moviegoing Turks meet new enemy, and it is U.S.
 By: Sebnem Arsu The New York Times on: 16.02.2006 [07:05] (562 reads)



By Sebnem Arsu The New York Times
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2006

"Valley of the Wolves - Iraq," which opened last week in movie theaters in Turkey, Austria and Germany, is a Rambo-like action story involving, in this case, Turkish gunmen who seek revenge against a tyrannical occupying army. But in this version, the most expensive movie ever made in Turkey, the enemy is no oppressive third-world dictatorship. The commander's name is "Sam" - as in Uncle - and the opposing forces are Americans, who are being punished for offenses against Turkish as well as Iraqi pride and honor.

(5264 bytes) [c]



Moviegoing Turks meet new enemy, and it is U.S.

ISTANBUL The crowd cheered, clapped and whistled as the Turkish agent plunged the knife into the chest of the enemy commander.

"Valley of the Wolves - Iraq," which opened last week in movie theaters in Turkey, Austria and Germany, is a Rambo-like action story involving, in this case, Turkish gunmen who seek revenge against a tyrannical occupying army.

But in this version, the most expensive movie ever made in Turkey, the enemy is no oppressive third-world dictatorship. The commander's name is "Sam" - as in Uncle - and the opposing forces are Americans, who are being punished for offenses against Turkish as well as Iraqi pride and honor.

Sam William Marshall, played by Billy Zane, is portrayed as a sociopath, killing people without a second thought and claiming that he is doing God's will, a thinly veiled reference to statements by President George W. Bush about America's "crusade" for democracy in Iraq and the Middle East.

Indeed, while fictional, some of the movie is based on real events. The opening sequence portrays an incident that made headlines in 2003, when a group of Turkish special forces soldiers in Iraq was taken into custody by American marines. The Turks, mistaken for insurgents, were handcuffed and held with hoods over their heads. The incident angered many Turks.

Other scenes show ruthless marines killing Iraqis and soldiers mistreating inmates

at Abu Ghraib prison. A Jewish-American doctor, played by Gary Busey, is shown as shipping inmates' organs to New York, London and Israel. All these, according to the screenwriter, Bahadır Özdener, were inspired by real events.

Zane said he was not bothered by the movie's anti-American tone, adding that the horrors of war should be exposed.

"I acted in this movie because I'm a pacifist," he said in a televised interview. "I'm against all kinds of war."

Whatever its artistic merits, the movie, which has already broken Turkish box office records, has highlighted a growing discrepancy in how America is seen in Turkey.

Officially, the two governments have been enjoying much-improved relations after a low point in 2003, when Turkey refused to allow American troops to cross the country to invade Iraq. On the street, however, public opinion of America has been steadily declining since the invasion of Iraq, the revelations about the abuse at Abu Ghraib and the suspected transferring of Al Qaeda suspects to foreign countries to be tortured in secret prisons.

Yet since the invasion, Turkey has provided logistical support to American troops in Iraq from Incirlik Air Base and has contributed military personnel to the American-led mission in Afghanistan.

Washington has reciprocated by vocally supporting Turkey's bid for membership in the European Union and efforts to resolve the Cyprus conflict.

The issue becomes complicated, however, when it comes to the war on terror. Outwardly, the two countries are committed partners in fighting terrorism of all kinds.

But Turkey has been fighting with Kurdish separatists seeking independence since the 1980s.

Since the invasion of Iraq, the U.S. military has been reluctant to act against the Kurdish Workers Party and has allowed it to operate in northern Iraq, which has distressed many in Turkey. Essentially, Washington tolerates a de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

"People think that the U.S. supports an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq and therefore threatens the unity of Turkish land," said Nilufer Narlı, a sociology professor at Bahçeşehir University in Istanbul.

Popular opinion of the United States and its allies, including Israel, seems to be steadily declining. Anti-American novels, including one that portrayed a war between the United States and Turkey, have been selling briskly; Hitler's "Mein Kampf" became a best seller last year.

Narlı believes that the perceived U.S. support for the Kurds is at the heart of this decline.

Despite its popularity, however, "Valley of the Wolves - Iraq" neither triggered widespread anti-American violence in the country nor urged people to take to the streets to protest the war in Iraq.

"It doesn't show anything that we did not already know," said Fahri Kaya, a 22-year-old security guard. "It was more like a group therapy that gave people a chance to let go of their negative feelings against what's been happening in Iraq as they shouted, clapped and cried."

The U.S. ambassador to Turkey, Robert Wilson, in a televised interview on NTV last week, acknowledged that it was only a movie made for entertainment, but he said he still was not pleased with the way America was portrayed. He highlighted the good relations that the two countries have shared.

Egemen Bağış, the former head of the Turkish American Businessmen's Association, agreed.


"Our alliance with the U.S. has very strong roots," he said. "A movie or a book just cannot destroy it."

http://www.iht.com/bin/print_ipub.php?file=/articles/2006/02/13/news/journal.php

[Turkish rush to embrace anti-US film \(BBC's spin\)](#)

Valleyofthewolvesiraq.com

8 comments

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an example
by turco on 16.02.2006 [07:56]

Goebbels would admire:

Popular opinion of the United States and its allies, including Israel, seems to be steadily declining. Anti-American novels, including one that portrayed a war between the United States and Turkey, have been selling briskly; Hitler's "Mein Kampf" became a best seller last year.

Notice how Hitler's "Mein Kampf" is mentioned among anti-american movies and novels. Intended association is obvious if you are careful, anything anti-american (the other works the reader has no idea about) should be something like Hitler's "Mein Kampf"! (the only well known work in the list!)

excerpt from the bbc version
by turco on 16.02.2006 [07:59]

If I see an American when I get out of here I feel like taking a hood and putting it over their head.

interesting idea actually.

I wasn't in the cinema for many years
by austrian on 16.02.2006 [11:24]

but this film is a must for me to see....

Billy & Gary.....
by EnglishWorkingclassDissident. on 16.02.2006 [14:38]

Can kiss goodbye to any further advancement to there careers in America until, the neocons shuffle of there mortal coils that is, BRAVO Mr Zane and Mr Busey, Its nice to see these arty farty types putting there principle before career egoism....BRILLIANT.

Can't wait...
by stopwar on 16.02.2006 [20:11]

for it to come to England. It will be VERY popular. After a good dose of pro-US propaganda, the most popular films in the UK in the early 70s were highly anti-US military/cavalry etc. ... such as Soldier Blue.

True story...
by sjreese on 16.02.2006 [20:59]

American soldiers in Iraq crash a wedding and pump a little boy full of lead in front of his mother.

They kill dozens of innocent people with random machine gun fire, shoot the groom in the head, and drag those left alive to Abu Ghraib prison - where a Jewish doctor cuts out their organs, which he sells to rich people in New York, London and Tel Aviv.

@ sjreese
by Neyaz on 17.02.2006 [00:58]

VERY TRUE STORY ,Thank you!

Soldier Blue.....

by EnglishWorkingclassDissident. on 17.02.2006 [01:30]

Ahhh, how could I ever forget Candice Bergmans buttocks rippling in the back of the chuck wagon.

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Feb 06: Sunni brothers
found bound, shot, Abu
Dashir Bahdad

Min	Max
28427	32041



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Feb 01: Eight labourers
by bomb, Al Jadida,
Baghdad

Jan 31: Two children in
crossfire in Hit

Feb 01: One by roadside
bomb in Baquba

Feb 01: One by roadside
bomb in Amiriya