THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT IRAQ

This is a letter to his friends from Ray Reynolds, a medic in the Iowa Army National Guard, serving in Iraq. To The Point has determined its authenticity and updated its factual claims, verifying them with USAID and the Pentagon:

As I head off to Baghdad for the final weeks of my stay in Iraq, I wanted to say thanks to all of you who did not believe the media. They have done a very poor job of covering everything that has happened. I am sorry that I have not been able to visit all of you during my two week leave back home.

And just so you can rest at night knowing something is happening in Iraq that is noteworthy, I thought I would pass this on to you. This is the list of things that has happened in Iraq recently:

(Please share it with your friends and compare it to the version that your paper is producing.)

· Over 4 million children have up-to-date immunizations.
· School attendance is up 80% from levels before the war. Attendance was at 95% during the recent national exam week.
· Over 2,500 schools have been renovated and rid of the weapons stored there so education can occur; the goal is over 4,000 by the end of the year.
· The port of Umm Qasar was renovated so grain can be off-loaded from ships faster. It is modern and functioning for the first time in 20 years.
· The country is producing over 2 million barrels of oil a day now.
· Water treatment plants are being rehabilitated and built throughout the country. Millions of Iraqis now have greater access to clean drinking water than under Saddam.
· Electrical power plants are being rebuilt across Iraq. The country will be receiving almost 50% more electrical power than it did before the war.
· 100% of the hospitals are open and fully staffed, compared to 35% before the war. That’s 240 hospitals plus 2,400 primary health care clinics.
· Over 80% of Iraqis are now governed by locally chosen municipal councils.
· Over 200,000 Iraqis now provide security for their fellow citizens, including 77,000 police officers, 73,000 in the Facility Protection Service (protecting infrastructure from sabotage and terrorism), and over 30,000 in the Civil Defense Corps.
· There are now over 900,000 telephone subscribers and 225,000 wireless subscribers.
· Students are taught field sanitation and hand washing techniques to prevent the spread of germs. Almost 9 million textbooks have been distributed. Teachers are paid 12 to 25 times what they made under Saddam.
· An interim constitution has been signed, defining Iraq as “federal, democratic, and pluralist,” and guaranteeing basic rights to all Iraqis such as freedom of speech and religion.

Don't believe for one second that these people do not want us there. I have met many, many

people from Iraq that want us there, and in a bad way. They say they will never see the freedoms we talk about but they hope their children will.

We are doing a good job in Iraq and I challenge anyone, anywhere to dispute me on these facts. So if you happen to run into John Kerry, be sure to give him my email address and send him to Denison, Iowa. This soldier will set him straight.

If you are like me and very disgusted with how this period of rebuilding has been portrayed, email this to a friend and let them know there are good things happening.

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