

# Crafting Tragedy

*“The presence or movements of the civilian population or individual civilians shall not be used to render certain points or areas immune from military operations, in particular in attempts to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield, favour or impede military operations. The parties to the conflict shall not direct the movement of the civilian population or individual civilians in order to shield military objectives from attacks or to shield military operations.”*

**– Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949, Article 51**

Based on what he has done in the past, if conflict with Iraq should occur, Saddam is almost certain to lay a trap for the world’s media. He apparently believes that dead Iraqi civilians are his most powerful weapon in trying to create revulsion against any military action that might occur against Iraq.

During Operation Desert Storm, the coalition chose its targets carefully and had strict rules of engagement intended to avoid bombing innocent civilians. Even with careful targeting, fire discipline, and the well-known use of precision munitions in the campaign, some civilian casualties occurred. Saddam Hussein used deaths of innocent civilians to try to undermine international and domestic support for the American-led coalition, and the Iraqi regime made many claims that civilian targets had been hit by coalition air forces, with loss of innocent civilian lives.

