

# “Life Looking Death in the Eye: The Iraqi War as Experienced by a U.S. Army Contractor” by Mahir Ibrahimov

## Top Customer Reviews

[—A Comparison of Two Books](#)

By [Lowell Bunker](#) on May 1, 2012

Format: Paperback

Being the first (besides the author) to read both books written by Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov, let me also be the first to tell you that you need to read both books--the first one (Invitation to Rain), followed by the second one (Life Looking Death in the Eye), and in that order. Invitation to Rain gives you the rich background of the various cultures in which Dr. Ibrahimov has lived during his life and sets the tone to help you better understand his thoughts and philosophy expressed in Life Looking Death in the Eye, a more detailed account of his time with U.S. Forces in Iraq.

Invitation to Rain is a biography of Dr. Ibrahimov's life and as described by reviewer Joshua C. Neuman (Lawton, OK), is an absolute page-turner. Because several readers have already commented on the first book (Invitation to Rain), let me give you my observations on the second book (Life Looking Death in the Eye).

Whereas Invitation to Rain starts near the beginning of and takes you through the author's experiences of young adult and adult life, sprinkled here and there with some lessons learned, Life Looking Death in the Eye takes you to a specific time of his life during which he experienced a great deal of personal risk, giving you an inside look at what it was like to accompany U.S. Forces in Iraq as a translator/interpreter.

The Prologue "Deadly Day" gives a snapshot of one particular hair-raising day which captures the reader and sets the tone for the rest of the book.

This book combines details of the daily routine (life in the villages visited, attacks on the U.S. bases in Iraq and frustration with a slow moving bureaucracy to acquire U.S. citizenship) with intellectually-packed observations of social, religious and political factors that Dr. Ibrahimov believes are responsible for this war. He talks about the "Islamic factor" and how "religion is being used by the different militant organizations as the ideological basis for their activities against the coalition forces and the newly-emerging Iraqi government."

Dr. Ibrahimov describes some of his military and civilian/contracted coworkers including their opinions about how the war is going and what it is going to take to "fix" things. He notes one particular conversation where Sergeant M. tells him that with only 150,000 U.S. troops spread over the entire country, the Iraqi National Guard being trained by the U.S. could easily overrun the U.S. forces if they (Iraqi NG) ever decided to turn against us.

Dangers are ever-present, such as the time they were traveling to Garagul when they came up to a boy standing on the road with wires in his hands. Were these leftover supplies from an improvised explosive device (IED) that had just been planted or was the boy set up as bait for an awaiting ambush? Interpreter Ibrahimov gets to go up to the boy to try to decipher why he is standing there with wires in his hand. You'll

have to read the book to find out the answer.

One of the truly intriguing sections of the book to me, is Chapter 42, where the author outlines "possible strategic implications of the Iraq War." He believes that the Iraq War is the last war overseas and he explains why he believes this to be the case. He also explains what he believes it will take to defeat insurgency and terrorism, including a more balanced policy dealing with Israel and its Arab neighbors and the creation of two states: Israel and Palestine.

This book is a must-read for anyone who wants to know what it must be like to work for the U.S. military as an interpreter and for those who have had similar experiences and who want to compare Dr. Ibrahimov's experiences to their own.

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### [A Very Interesting Read](#)

By [Reviewer](#) on May 6, 2012

Format: Paperback

Dr. Ibrahimov is a true patriot and is an amazing person who, in his book, "Life Looking Death in the Eye," adeptly merges his personal reflections regarding his time in Iraq with his astute political observations to create a book that educates and keeps the reader's interest from the first to the last chapters. It is just incredible that Dr. Ibrahimov spent time in the Soviet Army, the US's most powerful enemy during the Cold War, and then became a US citizen and put himself in harm's way to help the US in the War Against Terror. During times of personal illness, family separation and cumbersome bureaucracy, Dr. Ibrahimov never gives up on his primary purpose----to serve his adopted country. He serves with dignity and professionalism and his writing reflects his selfless service and is both inspirational and motivational.