

## Can They ‘Repeal’ the Dead? Ask Orwell.

Yesterday the US Senate repealed the Iraq 2002 ‘Authorization for the Use of Military Force’

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Global Research, April 03, 2023  
[Free Press](#) 1 April 2023

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

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*Yesterday the US Senate repealed the Iraq 2002 ‘Authorization for the Use of Military Force’ (AUMF), in which, at the behest of the Bush Administration, the U.S. licensed itself to attack the people of Iraq, and, with a fusillade of pressure-packed, hysteria driven lies, dragged along a tricked-up international “coalition of the willing.”*

The 2002 AUMF, now otherwise known as an official, categorical, murderous lie, passed twenty years ago, by a Senate vote of 77-23.

Yesterday’s repeal basically said: ‘We repeal the AUMF.’ That’s it. No explanation in the bill as to why. No preamble which recited the litany of lies which Congress bought lock, stock and two smoking barrels. The deaths of one million innocent Iraqis didn’t rate so much as a mention in the repeal.

No apology was made to the people of Iraq. No apologies to the families of dead and injured U.S. soldiers. No mention of the war’s on-going cost to U.S. taxpayers, the amount now approaching five trillion dollars.

Opposition to the repeal even focused on the possibility of having to use the same AUMF again, this time against *Iran in defense of Iraq*. You read that right. The Senate also repealed a 1991 gobbledegook resolution that authorized military action against Iraq. The bill now moves onto the House of Representatives.

It turns out the repeal, at last, was about Congress “reclaiming its war power” (which federal courts have ruled is ultimately vested in the power of Congress to withhold funding for the war, but, small matter, the US Senate repealed the Iraq war authorization- twenty years too late, and without correcting the historical record.

By the way, the Roll Call internet news story about the repeal of the AUMFs prominently featured a Boeing military aircraft ad for the KC46A refueling tanker with an artist's rendition of a mid-air hook-up of two planes with this graphic letter overlay: "Winning Won't Wait." Indeed. "Winning" also means never to say "sorry."

In 1964 President Johnson misused an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin to gain approval to wage war in Vietnam. That war resulted in the deaths of 58,281 U.S. servicemen and women killed in action or non-combat deaths, with 153,372 wounded in action.

According to the 1991 Vietnam Life History Study, the Vietnamese civilian death toll, 1965-1975, was over one million. Other mortality assessments of the breadth of the war throughout Southeast Asia run significantly higher.

When I first stepped onto the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on January 3, 1997, I was filled with a deep sense of awe. I finally made it to Congress, on my fifth try, over a period of twenty-five years.

I was imbued with a sense of humility as I stood in the House well, a fledgling federal lawmaker. I looked up and studied the twenty-three marble relief portraits of some of the greatest lawgivers of all time, among them Moses, Solon, Suleiman, Napoleon, Jefferson, Blackstone, and Hammurabi, King of the old Babylon Empire, c.1792 - c.1750, BC.

Moses, as Torah tells in the Book of Exodus, received the Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, on two tablets of stone written directly, we are told, by the finger of God. Exodus 21:23-27 expresses a commandment with familiar, mirrored, and retributive consequences: "An Eye for an Eye."

The Code of Hammurabi, according to historians, preceded the Ten Commandments, and prevailed in an area that included the Plain of Mesopotamia (now part of modern Iraq) setting into stone, literally, the principal of an "Eye for an Eye" punishment and 281 other rules, such as: "If any one bring an accusation of any crime before the elders, and does not prove what he has charged, he shall, if it be a capital offense charged, be put to death."

Is there a more powerful statement from the ancient world about the seriousness and the consequences of a capital lie?

The souls of one million Iraqis who perished in a prevaricated war cry out for justice, and the repeal of the AUMF without addressing the circumstances of how and why it was passed raises the Cynicism of the Senate to an art form.

President Bush violated his oath to "preserve, protect and defend" the Constitution of the United States, specifically by lying to Congress in his communications regarding Iraq as a threat to national security, and then fraudulently induced Congress to exercise its constitutional responsibilities "'Consistent with section 8 (a) (1) of the War Powers Resolution," for the Authorization of the Use of Military Force (AUMF) against Iraq.

There are, after all, laws against perjury.

Vice President Cheney, similarly violated his oath of office as well as the clause disclaiming "purpose of evasion."

The U.S. government has unfinished business with respect to the fact that the 2002 AUMF was the ultimate false flag event, an unforgiveable lie which blamed Iraq for the attack for 9/11 and continued to lie when it falsely testified Iraq was ready to attack the US with Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Code of Hammurabi provided a legal structure for the ancient world, with harsh consequences, measure for measure. If, thirty-seven centuries later, there remains such a thing, however inconvenient it may seem, as the rule of law in the United States today, if there is an scintilla of morality left in the U.S. government's claim to a moral standing, then the U.S. Justice Department must take up the matter of the lies which were constructed to legitimize the U.S.' war in Iraq.

Section 2441 of Chapter 118 of the US Code, relates to war crimes. It applies to U.S. nationals for acts committed inside or outside the United States. A war crime is defined as: "a grave breach in any of the international conventions signed at Geneva 12 August 1949, or any protocol to such convention to which the United States is a party...." The US is a signatory to the Geneva Convention and the 1949 Hague Convention which similarly prohibits war crimes such as wanton attacks on a civilian population.

The Supremacy Clause (Article VI, clause 2) mandates that laws passed under the aegis of the US Constitution, as well as treaties signed by the United States government, constitute the supreme law of the land.

The question remains: Is there such a thing as The Law in the land when it relates to a President and Vice President who lie in taking the nation to war? Can Congress really erase the history of how the Iraq War started, and its devastating consequences? Congress may blithely repeal the AUMF, but it can't repeal the deaths of over a million Iraqis and 5000 American soldiers.

There must be a full-on legislative, historical, judicial and moral reckoning. Congress is trying to let itself off the hook and erase history - but the real consequences remain. Millions dead, our country increasingly seen internationally as a pariah, our troops murdered and suicidal, our communities in economic ruin, our moral standing in the world hammered, our leadership diminished. We are at a time of great reckoning and here our elected officials are, not standing up with responsibility, but ignoring the initiation of the war and its consequences.

Both the Senate and the House approved the Iraq War Resolution, despite being in possession of information that there was no basis for the war. Out of convenience, and a go-along-to-get-along mentality. They chose to be lied to!

In its outrageously tidy repeal of the AUMF, Congress is attempting to erase its own responsibility and history, including its own role in approving the war. Unless and until Congress has made a full accounting of the process that led to the approval of the now-repealed resolution it has blood on its hands.

We teach children that if they do something wrong, we take responsibility for it, own up to it, and accept the consequences. The repeal of the 2002 AUMF is strictly Orwellian:

*"Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered.*

*And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right."* — George Orwell, '1984'

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*Featured image: George W. Bush declares victory in Iraq War, USS Abraham Lincoln, San Diego, May 1, 2003*

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