

U.S. Troops Out of Iraq

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A petition launched on March 19, 2020

The mass killing and destruction of Iraq that began 17 years ago today, assessed by the most scientifically respected measures available, killed over 1.4 million Iraqis, saw 4.2 million additional people injured, and 4.5 million made refugees.

The 1.4 million dead (and still rising) was 5% of the Iraqi population. That compares to 2.5% of the U.S. population lost in the U.S. Civil War, or 3.5% in Japan in World War II, 1% in France and Italy in World War II, 0.3% in the United States in World War II, and 0.001% in the United States in this war on Iraq.

The U.S. military has targeted civilians, journalists, hospitals, and ambulances. It has made use of cluster bombs, white phosphorous, depleted uranium, and a new kind of napalm in urban areas. Birth defects, cancer rates, and infant mortality are through the roof. Water supplies, sewage treatment plants, hospitals, bridges, and electricity supplies remain devastated. Healthcare, nutrition, and education are nothing like they were before the war. And we should remember that healthcare and nutrition had already deteriorated during years of economic warfare waged through the most comprehensive economic sanctions ever imposed in modern history, sanctions that were accompanied by bombs and which followed the destruction of the Gulf War.

For years, the occupying forces have broken the society of Iraq down, encouraging ethnic and sectarian division and violence, resulting in a segregated country and the repression of rights that Iraqis used to enjoy, even under Saddam Hussein's brutal police state – which, of course, was itself supported by the U.S. government for years.

While U.S. troops have been reduced in Iraq, they have never been removed. In January, the Iraqi Parliament voted that all U.S. troops should leave. The U.S. government has refused to leave, and has instead proposed installing (“defensive”) missiles in Iraq targeting Iran. While Iran is depicted in U.S. media as an evil enemy, the U.S. military does not claim that Iran is a threat to the actual United States, only to U.S. troops near Iran and U.S. “interests.” The refusal to leave and the decision to install missiles endanger Iraq, Iran, the entire region, and a world at risk of nuclear escalation and climate collapse that cannot afford any more wars.

The terrorist attack on Baghdad 17 years ago, which was intended to “shock and awe” people into terror and submission, followed months of pro-war propaganda in U.S. corporate media and from the U.S. government.

Senate Foreign Relations Chair Joe Biden promoted the White House's lies about weapons of mass destruction, pushed hard for war, and orchestrated hearings that excluded dissenting voices.

Many were fooled or claimed to be. Donald Trump's last public comment on the war before it started was that he supported it.

It is now popular in U.S. politics to deny having supported the war, even to claim to have ended it. But there is virtually no discussion of the moral and practical necessity of complying with the wishes of the Iraqi government – wishes that line up with a demand that many of us have been making for exactly 17 years – to withdraw all U.S. troops and mercenaries and bases and weapons from Iraqi soil.

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