

# No More US Wars in Iraq and Libya

March 18, 2016

March 19 marks 13 years since the US invasion of Iraq and 5 years since the US bombing of Libya. The nine (or really thirteen) year Iraq war began after congress voted to authorize President George W Bush to use military force against Saddam Hussein's government based on false claims that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction. The seven-month bombing of Libya came as part of a United Nations (UN) mandate to protect civilians who were rising up against Muammar Gadhafi; President Barack Obama launched airstrikes (including drone strikes) without a specific mandate from Congress. Both military interventions led to the dictators being overthrown and killed, plunging both countries into chaos and civil war.

It is no coincidence that both dictators had also nationalized the oil industry of their nations, creating motivation for the US to intervene— since its policy in the “Middle East” is to control the flow of oil.

Since 2014, the war in Iraq has re-ignited under the guise of fighting the Islamic State (ISIS) as the US continues to send advisors and special forces, with troops numbering 4450 in early February ([Military.com](#), February 3). The US has been shopping around the idea of new military intervention in Libya, also because of the presence of ISIS, prompting Glenn Greenwald to write “one of the few benefits of the NATO bombing of Libya will [come back] to the... machine of Endless Militarism: It provided a pretext for another new war” ([The Intercept](#), January 27).

The US dropped 40 bombs in Libya on February 19, killing 49 people including two Serbian diplomats who were being held hostage ([CNN](#) and [BBC](#), February 20). The airstrikes were targeted at a specific Tunisian militant, reflecting the US' repeated tactic of targeted assassination rather than self-defense. The recognized Libyan government objected to the strikes ([AFP](#), February 20).

The death toll in Iraq due to the US invasion and occupation has been estimated at between 155,000 ([Iraq Body Count](#), March 15) and well over a million ([Reuters](#), January 30, 2008). At least 3841 were killed in February 2016 as part of a war that is supposedly over ([Antiwar.com](#), March 1). Meanwhile, military “contractors” have been pouring back into Iraq, up from 250 in 2015 to over 2000 in January this year ([Defense One](#), February 23).

Both countries also have histories of US military intervention. Iraq was initially bombed for 43 days in 1991 by President George HW Bush in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (which many people believe was “greenlighted” by the US to begin with). This was on top of the world's most stringent sanctions that remained in place from 1990 until after the 2003 invasion. Libya, it's been pointed out, was the focus of the US' first foreign intervention in 1801 during the First Barbary War (which is where the Marines' Hymn line “to the shores of Tripoli” comes from), as well as numerous clashes in the 1980s under Presidents Reagan and Bush ([New York Times](#), February 19).

The war against ISIS has now been raging for over a year and a half with no authorization from Congress. President Obama is conducting the wars in Iraq and Libya (and Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen) based on the 2001 Authorization which was ostensibly limited to actions against those responsible for the events of 9/11. Since ISIS did not exist in 2001, the legal justification does not hold up, and Americans should demand a cessation of drone strikes, airstrikes, and military operations. It has been nearly 15 years since 9/11 and the US seems to be engaged in a perpetual war.

Today, March 18 marks 750 weeks since Portland Peaceful Response Coalition (PPRC) began its weekly Friday rally in Pioneer Square, shortly after the US invasion of Afghanistan, making this the 751st continuous weekly protest.



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The Iraq Affinity Group is committed to educating the public about the effects of US policy on the people of Iraq, and other areas including SW Asia, North Africa, and the “Middle East.” Regular meetings usually 2nd Mondays, 7 PM.