

March 19,
2021

IRAQ: Still Recovering 18 Years After the US Invasion

JOE BIDEN IS THE SIXTH CONSECUTIVE U.S. PRESIDENT TO BOMB IRAQ

March 19 marks eighteen years since the United States launched a massive military campaign of “shock and awe,” killing thousands of people in Iraq, then invading and occupying the country. The 2003 US invasion and occupation was based on the knowingly false information presented by the **George W. Bush** administration alleging that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. Members of Congress, including then-Senator Joe Biden, voted to authorize war. After the invasion, no WMDs were found. As part of an agreement by Bush, President **Barack Obama** withdrew troops in 2011, only to send more back in to fight the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (“ISIS”) in 2014. In early 2020, **President Trump** deeply damaged US-Iraq relations by using a drone to assassinate Iranian General Soleimani and an Iraqi militia leader inside of Iraq. The Iraqi parliament voted to demand the US leave their country. **In late January 2021, the US killed an Islamic State leader in an airstrike, making Joe Biden the sixth consecutive US President to bomb the country of Iraq.**

Before the invasion, from 1990-2003 Iraq was subjected to some of the most stringent sanctions in history, resulting in limited access to electricity, medicine and food. Limits were put on the sale of Iraqi oil, its chief export, and likely the main reason the US continues to stay in this country of 38 million people. President Trump famously stated that the US should have taken Iraq’s oil after the invasion. President **George HW Bush** decimated much of Iraq’s infrastructure in the 1991 “Gulf War.” President **Bill Clinton** initiated airstrikes in so-called “no fly zones” and launched attacks on Baghdad in 1998. The problems of providing basic necessities to all Iraqis still persist as a result of the US invasion and occupation, leading to ongoing protests inside Iraq, as well as violence by militant groups emboldened by the destabilization caused by the war. George W. Bush declared “Mission Accomplished” on May 1, 2003, but the war in Iraq continues today, with 2500 troops remaining in the nation despite the Parliament’s vote. The US also owns a heavily fortified compound in Baghdad—featuring the world’s largest embassy.

Andrew Jones, a legal expert from Coventry University. noted that while international law allows a country like Iraq to invite foreign troops on their soil, “there are rules on when a state overstays its welcome and becomes in breach of its international obligations.” Jones said that the refusal to leave is a violation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations charter (The Conversation, February 6, 2020).

The war has also spilled outside the borders of Iraq. Initially, President Obama ordered airstrikes and ground troops in **Syria** as a response to the rise of ISIS. Though Trump pledged to remove those troops, the US left at least 200 there to “protect Syrian oil fields.” After an attack on a US compound that killed one contractor, **President Biden launched an attack on a militant group in Syria, killing 22 people on February 26** (Agence France Presse, February 27). Another attack in early March prompted Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin to declare that “We demand the right to protect our troops.” **There seems to be no recognition that if the US had never invaded Iraq, no American troops would be getting attacked.**

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US airstrike kills top Islamic State leader in Iraq

January 30, 2021

Iraqi officials said that the attack on an underground hideout avenged the deaths of the 32 Iraqis killed in the Islamic State attack on a Baghdad market last week. More than 100 others were wounded in the attack, the deadliest in Baghdad in four years.

By: New York Times | Baghdad | Written by Jane Arraf and Falih Hassan



Workers clean a bloody street near Tayaran Square in Baghdad after twin suicide bombings left at least 32 dead, Jan. 21, 2021. (Ivor Prickett/The New York Times)

U.S. airstrikes in a joint mission with Iraqi forces have killed the top Islamic State group leader in Iraq, an attack aimed at stemming the group’s resurgence and exacting retribution for a deadly double-suicide bombing in Baghdad last week.

March 19 also marks 10 years since President Obama led the US/NATO war on Libya, an air war involving roughly 7000 bombing runs which killed at least 582 civilians (Airwars.org) and led to the murder of leader Mohammed Ghadafi. Libya has been engaged in a civil war ever since, though a UN-brokered resolution appears to be underway in 2021.

18 YEARS SINCE THE IRAQ INVASION 3/19/21 (continued)

In 2002, Congress approved an Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF), designed to remove Saddam Hussein from power. Although that goal was accomplished, the **2002 Authorization remains in effect today** and was used to justify the war on ISIS. The House of Representatives voted 236-166 on January 30, 2020, to repeal the 2002 AUMF, with 11 Republicans joining Democrats. In 2021, particularly following Biden's airstrike on Syria, there is renewed bipartisan talk of repealing that AUMF (Politico, March 3).

Joe Biden approved airstrike on Iran militia Syria 'killed at least 22'

JOE BIDEN ordered an airstrike on Iranian militia structures in Syria yesterday, killing at least 22 people, according to a war monitor report.

By DYLAN DONNELLY PUBLISHED: 00:00, Sat, Feb 27, 2021 | UPDATED: 08:09, Sat, Feb 27, 2021



UK Daily Express, February 27

In late 2011, Obama followed up on a pledge made by G.W. Bush to withdraw US combat troops, but left about 500 military personnel there as “advisors” and to protect the US embassy. That number went back up to about 9000 for the fight against ISIS under Presidents Obama and Trump. In the efforts to push ISIS out of Mosul, the US damaged or destroyed all of that city's bridges and hundreds of homes, causing the deaths of roughly 9600 civilians (Associated Press, December 20, 2017). In 2017, the year of the mass bombing, 36,898 Iraqis were killed. In the following three years, fewer than 10,000 per year died due to ongoing warfare (Antiwar.com). So far in 2021, at least 358 more people have been killed or found dead (Antiwar.com, February 1 and 28). **Overall, just since 2014, over 200,000 people were killed in war-related violence in Iraq—equivalent to almost 1/3 the population of Portland.**

The cost in lives for the United States has been far less, but that is not to minimize the deaths of the 4586 Americans who fought and died in this war. **The cost to US taxpayers in dollars has been extremely high, with at least \$1.992 trillion spent in the first 17 years of warfare** (The Conversation, February 4, 2020). That money alone could go to bolstering this country's medical capabilities for emergencies like the coronavirus.

It is clear the US wants to stay in Iraq to control the oil resources not just in Iraq, but in the entire region. The 1991 war was ostensibly to eject Saddam Hussein's troops from Kuwait and the 2003 invasion was over non-existent WMDs. One needs to ask, why is the US embassy in Baghdad the world's largest, when Iraq is the 36th largest country by population and 58th largest in size (169,000 square miles, less than 1/20th the size of the US). For the past few years, the US has been setting up **Venezuela** to be the next Iraq, demonizing the elected President Nicolas Maduro and trying to provoke a military conflict, imposing sanctions and supporting the opposition. Venezuela has the world's largest known oil reserves, more than Saudi Arabia, Iran or Iraq.

In February 2020, the US signed an agreement with the Taliban to end what is now the 19-year-old war in **Afghanistan**. The Biden administration is balking at the agreed upon deadline of May 1 to pull out all US troops (Washington Times, February 10). On March 14, the *New York Times* revealed that the US has 1000 more troops than the 2500 they claimed are still in Afghanistan. US troops in **Syria** are there without Congressional, UN or Syrian approval. Fortunately, Biden announced an end to most US support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in their war on **Yemen**, though reserving America's right to bomb that country to attack supposed “terrorists.” Under Trump, the US increased its airstrikes in **Somalia** from 14 in 2016 to 63 in 2019, with 52 in 2020 and at least 6 in January 2021 (Military Times, January 26). The US ended its drone strikes in **Pakistan** in mid-2018, but there were at least 550 such strikes in **Libya** from 2011 to 2019 (the *Intercept*, June 20, 2018).

The US is indicating they could start wars with **Iran, North Korea, Russia and China**. America's military budget is roughly \$750 billion per year while our infrastructure is crumbling and thousands of people have no homes or health care. **It is time to end all US wars, bring the troops home and spend money on human needs, not war!**

This flyer was prepared
in March, 2021 by the

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Meetings usually 2nd Tuesdays, 7 PM; next one is April 13.

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www.pjw.info/Iraq.html
Contact us about our meetings !

March 20 event endorsed by the Pacific Green Party, held as part of the weekly Friday Rally for Peace and Justice ongoing since November, 2001.