

March 20,
2012

CASUALTIES OF IRAQ, NINE YEARS LATER



BACKGROUND:

Nine years ago, on March 19, 2003, the US invasion of Iraq began with a bombing campaign nicknamed “Shock and Awe.” In December, 2011, US combat troops withdrew from Iraq in what was highly publicized as “the end of the war.” But ever since the Iraqi government fell in April, 2003, the “war” has been an occupation, which continues today with an ongoing US presence, including the world’s largest embassy.

What were the costs of the war and occupation? What lies ahead for the Iraqi people? Why would peace groups call for the US to get out of Iraq if the military has already withdrawn? Here are some facts to help explain.

LIVES LOST

3/19/03-12/31/11 (when US formally left):

US troops:

4,486 US military personnel dead
32,226 US military wounded in “hostile” situations
43,638 US military wounded in “non-hostile” situations (US Dept of Defense, 1/3/12)

US contractors:

1,560 contractors dead
(US Dept of Labor, 1/5/12)

Iraqi civilians:

114,212 deaths
14,702 caused by US-led coalition
1,201 of those killed by coalition forces whose age were known (4,140) were children (29%)

Iraqis including “insurgents” and military:

162,333 deaths (Iraq Body Count, 1/2/12)

Note that Iraq Body count only counted individual deaths that could be confirmed by two sources, so the true total could be much higher. (For example, the *Lancet* on 10/11/06 estimated 654,965.)



MONEY SPENT:

\$800 billion on the war/occupation (ABC news 12/17/11)
\$4 trillion estimated long term cost including caring for veterans (Market Watch, 12/15/11)
[\$15 trillion current total US debt (*USA Today*, 1/8/12)]

REFUGEES:

3 million Iraqis displaced from their homes:
1.7 million abroad
1.3 million internally
(Associated Press/United Nations 2/26/12)
[4.7 million in 2009 at the height:
2 million abroad, 2.7 million internal
(Associated Press 12/1/09)]

INFRASTRUCTURE:

Electricity:

6990 megawatts in 2011,
3958 megawatts in 2003 (pre-invasion), 4-8 hours a day, but
9000 megawatts in 1991 before Gulf War part 1
(Deltoid Science Blog, 5/25/05)

Water:

77% of the population (24 million) in 2011
52% of the population (12.9 million) in 2003
(Associated Press, 12/15/11), but
85% of the population in 1991
(UN Food and Agriculture Organization, 2008)

Doctors:

34,000 in 2003 (pre-invasion); but only
16,000 in 2008 (estimated, Brookings Institution 1/31/12)

US STILL IN IRAQ:

16,000 personnel at US embassy, mainly “contractors” (mostly former military-NBC, 12/12/11)
—just 2000 diplomats (some cutbacks expected)
55 number of people in embassy for Turkey, Iraq’s largest trading partner
(*New York Times*, 2/7/12)
763 defense contractors “showing the Iraqi army how to operate more than \$11 billion in weapons and equipment purchased from American companies” at a cost of \$524 million (*Stars & Stripes*, 12/14/11)
\$4.8 billion Overall “mission in Iraq” cost estimate for 2013 (Associated Press, 2/15/12)
104 acres US Embassy size (Al Jazeera ,12/16/11); largest in the world, size of the Vatican (NBC’s Rock Center, 12/12/11)
“Small fleet” Number of US drone aircraft Iraqi government protested being in its airspace (Agence France Presse, 1/30/12)
1 Helicopter forced to crash land on the Tigris River, causing Iraqis to question if the US is really out (*New York Times*, 2/7/12)

In addition, ExxonMobil made a deal to work on oil fields in Kurdish northern Iraq (CNN, 2/13/12), while General Electric is among other US corporations setting up shop as the troops have come home (Reuters, 11/21/11).

(more, over)

US/IRAQI RELATIONS 1980-2003:

In the 1980s, the US supported the regime of Saddam Hussein, particularly in its 1980-1988 war against Iran —though the US also secretly supplied arms to Iran at that time (NPR, 9/22/05).

In 1990, after Iraq invaded Kuwait, the US and UN imposed severe sanctions, which lasted until the invasion in 2003.

In January, 1991, the US led a 43-day military attack on Iraq which ended with ground troops attacking in late February, including strafing a convoy of Iraqi troops retreating from Kuwait (Frontline, 1/9/96).

From 1991-2003, the US maintained “No-Fly Zones” in northern and southern Iraq, dropping bombs regularly and killing hundreds of civilians (The Guardian, 3/3/00).

By 1996, the sanctions had caused the deaths of half a million Iraqi children, prompting then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to say “we think the price is worth it” (CBS/60 Minutes, 5/12/96).

In late 2002, the US Congress ceded its power to declare war to President George W Bush, whose administration alleged that Iraq had Weapons of Mass Destruction and ties to the incidents of 9/11.

After the invasion in March, 2003, Bush admitted that there were no WMDs and Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11 (Democracy Now!, 8/22/06).

Note that Iraq has the fourth largest oil reserves in the world behind Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, and Iran (OPEC, 11/2/11).



US REGIONAL CONCERNS:

IRAN: The Obama administration has stated that it will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon (Associated Press, 2/16/12).

The United States and the United Nations have imposed various levels of sanctions on Iran, which are harming ordinary Iranians and likely creating more support for their own government and more anti-Western sentiments (Reuters, 2/5/12).

The build-up is eerily similar to what happened in Iraq from August, 1990 to January, 1991, when sanctions were touted as an alternative to war.

Negotiations are the best alternative to war, and the US should engage Iran rather than threaten to attack.

AFGHANISTAN:

Recent incidents with US troops urinating on Afghan corpses, burning Korans and slaughtering civilians are just the things the US has apologized for. Meanwhile, night raids (Stars and Stripes, 11/22/11), air strikes (PressTV, 3/10/12), drone bombings (LA Times 10/14/11), and other warfare kill hundreds of civilians and are part of official US/NATO policy.

The Afghan occupation has already cost over 1900 American lives (icasualties.org) and \$500 billion (costofwar.com), and is expected to cost \$4 billion a year even after US combat forces have withdrawn (Washington Post, 2/16/12). It is time to end the occupation and bring the troops home.

LIBYA:

March 19 also marked 1 year since the US/NATO began airstrikes in Libya. That country is descending into warring militias (Time Magazine, 1/30/12) and is scattered with unexploded NATO ordnance (Mines Advisory Group, 2/17/12).

PAKISTAN:

While estimates vary, it is believed that about 2000 Pakistanis have died due to US drone strikes (Agence France Presse, 2/15/12), many of them civilians (Reprieve, 2/23/12).

*** DRONES *:**

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (aka drones) have also been used to bomb **Somalia** (Reuters, 2/24/12) and **Yemen** (Reuters, 3/10/12), and to spy on **Iran** (ABC, 1/17/12), the **Philippines** (Asia Times, 2/29/12) and **Syria** (MSNBC, 2/17/12) in what some think is a prelude to another Libya-type military intervention by the West.

US MILITARY BUDGET:

Despite much-debated cutbacks being proposed to the US military budget, the Pentagon has decided to ask for a base budget of \$525 billion plus \$88.4 billion to continue the occupation of Afghanistan in 2013 (Tikkun, 2/2/12).

This still gives the US the largest military budget in the world, greater than China, Russia, France, the UK, and the 10 next-largest spenders combined (globalissues.org).

In January, 2012, Portland City Council passed a resolution (based on one passed by the US Conference of Mayors in June, 2011) calling for the US to bring the troops and contractors home and spend the “War Dollars” on human needs.

The Multnomah County Commission is currently considering a similar resolution. Visit the Peace and Justice Works website for more information.

This flyer was prepared March 2012 by the **Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group**
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Meetings usually 2nd Tuesdays, 7 PM; next one is April 10.

Thanks to the cosponsors of the March 20, 2012 event: American Friends Service Committee, Alliance for Democracy- Portland Chapter, Portland Peaceful Response Coalition, War Resisters League-Portland, and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility; thanks also to the endorsers: Little Light of Mine Friends Worship Group, Northwest Veterans for Peace, Veterans Voice Radio Show, and RecruiterWatch Pdx.