

Iraqis Dying for Us to Leave

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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During the build-up to our illegal invasion of Iraq, American mainstream corporate media failed to challenge the lies of our government. Serving more as a lapdog than watchdog of the administration, the media perpetuated the lies of Iraqi connections to Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden, and the events of September 11, 2001. In fact, the Iraqi people—suffering and starving during economic sanctions—NEVER posed a threat to the U.S. or anyone else. Five years into our illegal occupation, while the stories have now shifted from a context of international terrorism to sectarian strife, the misinformation continues.

As I continue to speak around the U.S. calling for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, the response shaped by the media is: “we want to bring the troops home, but we’re afraid of what might happen when we leave.” My typical reply is sarcastic: “Like we have such a good thing going [in Iraq and Afghanistan](#) now, we don’t want to mess it up.” It simply does not make sense to predict that while Iraqis were better off before American and British soldiers illegally invaded (free healthcare, free education, better electricity and water services, and most importantly, the security of law and order), they will be worse off when the military occupation ends. Considering four of the major consequences of foreign troop withdrawal, it is clear that the first step in the right direction—for Iraq, America, and the rest of the world—is to bring the troops home.

1. Ending the occupation means ending aerial bombing raids. Bombs dropped by pilots and personnel who cannot see their targets continue to be a significant cause of civilian morbidity and mortality. The Iraqi Air Force was destroyed in 1991; it is only American and British bombers in Iraqi air space.

2. Ending the occupation means an end to American-run prisons in Iraq. The International Red Cross/ Red Crescent (IRCC) has estimated that 70-90% of those incarcerated in these jails have been arrested “by mistake.” Young, military-aged men are rounded up in ongoing daily house raids because they are the same (assumed) age and gender of resistance fighters. Every innocent boy or man who is imprisoned, tortured, raped, and/or murdered by American prison guards is the *raison d’être* of the resistance.

3. Ending the occupation means an end to U.S.-run death squads in Iraq. In the 1980’s, the horrors of kidnappings, disappearances, torture, murder, and bodies in the streets terrorized the societies of Latin American countries with American CIA involvement (e.g. Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, El Salvador). This frightening description applies to Iraqi society today, where American administrators and military are in charge. Without further Congressional supplemental bills for occupation, there is no further funding for death squads and mercenaries.

4. Ending the occupation means an end to the rape, torture, and murder of Iraqis by Americans. And I can guarantee you this: Bringing the troops home from Iraq and Afghanistan means that Americans will stop dying in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that is the ONLY plan that will accomplish that mission.

In September 2006, a majority of Iraqis called for the removal of U.S. troops within a year; 60% supported attacks on occupying forces. The Bush administration responded with a surge of troops that brought a surge in violence and greater suffering for Iraqis. In 2006, nearly 80% of Iraqis said the U.S. military in Iraq provokes more violence than it prevents. Their concern is the deadly occupation—not civil war—that has destroyed their lives and made Iraq a failed state.

If America were invaded by violent foreigners who coveted our resources and brought death and destruction, we would fight back—NOT to defend the Bush administration and Congress, but to defend the people and lives we love. Certainly our National Guard and armed forces would be on the front lines of our defense. If we respect the humanity of Iraqis, we should not expect them to do any less. Their legitimate resistance will bring an end to our illegal occupation. We must immediately and unconditionally withdraw troops from Iraq as if lives depend on it. Because they do.

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