

Leaving Afghanistan: Why Not Iraq and Syria?

United States military forces over the last two decades have destroyed numerous countries while also worsening the domestic crises.

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President Joe Biden announced several months ago that the United States would end its two decades-long occupation of the Central Asian state of Afghanistan.

Since the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon outside of Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001, the U.S. government has been at war with several countries and organizations all of which are within the oppressed regions of Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean.

The U.S. intervention in Afghanistan began clandestinely in the late 1970s when the administration of former President Jimmy Carter authorized efforts to undermine the socialist-oriented government which was aligned with the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). By the early 1980s, the administration of President Ronald Reagan escalated the interference in Afghan affairs by training, funding and providing diplomatic cover for the armed opposition groups in the country.

It was during these counter-revolutionary policy implementations towards Afghanistan and the Soviet Union that the al-Qaeda grouping was founded. These same forces which today Washington calls “terrorists” were in fact the by-product of imperialism.

Several other NATO countries joined the U.S. in its occupation of Afghanistan beginning in October 2001. Germany, France, Canada, Britain, among others have all had troops deployed in Afghanistan as part of the Pentagon-led military operation. All of these NATO countries took casualties in the war against the Afghans fighting to end the presence of foreign troops.

The Taliban, which is an Islamic-oriented movement, was in control of Afghanistan in 2001 at the time of the U.S. invasion. Even though they were bombed out of the capital during the early onslaught of the intervention, the organization remains intact two decades later after being subjected to the military prowess of NATO.

Official statistics supplied by the U.S. government indicates that approximately 2,300 troops were killed in action in Afghanistan while there were 30,000 wounded. These figures do not take into consideration the number of people who died later from their wounds or others who perished resulting from mental health issues stemming from serving in an unjust imperialist war.

The number of Afghan fighters and civilians killed since 2001 has been estimated by some sources to be around 71,000 people. This in all likelihood is a conservative estimate considering the massive bombing operations carried out by the Pentagon and its NATO allies.

One study on the impact of the Afghan war says the following:

“As of April 2021, more than 71,000 Afghan and Pakistani civilians are estimated to have died as a direct result of the war.

The United States military in 2017 relaxed its rules of engagement for airstrikes in Afghanistan, which resulted in a massive increase in civilian casualties. The CIA has armed and funded Afghan militia groups who have been implicated in grave human rights abuses and killings of civilians. Afghan land is contaminated with unexploded ordnance, which kills and injures tens of thousands of Afghans, especially children, as they travel and go about their daily chores. The war has exacerbated the effects of poverty, malnutrition, poor sanitation, lack of access to health care, and environmental degradation on Afghans’ health.” (See [this](#))

Consequently, this announced withdrawal, notwithstanding the military and intelligence personnel which will remain in Afghanistan to protect the U.S. embassy, the Kabul airport and continue the training of the local security forces installed by Washington, the country has been devastated by this imperialist war. The U.S. should be forced to pay reparations to Afghanistan for the destabilization, occupation and plunder of this country since 1979.

Iraq and Syria: Imperialism Must Withdraw in Line with the Desires of the People

Since 1990 the U.S. government has blockaded Iraq initially citing the seizure of Kuwait by the former leadership of President Saddam Hussein. A full-scale invasion of Kuwait and southern Iraq in early 1991 killed hundreds of thousands of people.

For the next twelve years, the Iraqi people endured enormous suffering due to the draconian sanctions imposed by the United Nations at the aegis of Washington. By 2003, under the pretext of disarming the Baathist government in Baghdad, the administration of President George Bush, Jr. invaded Iraq where U.S. troops still remain albeit in smaller numbers up until today.

Although successive administrations have declared the withdrawal of “combat troops” from Iraq, the Pentagon wants to guarantee that the influence of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the broader “Axis of Resistance”, which encompasses Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and other states, does not gain complete control of the region. After the beginning of destabilization efforts by the U.S. in Libya and Syria, the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (or Syria), popularly known as ISIS, was created.

ISIS and its affiliates have been waging war against the civilian governments in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The group has never attacked the State of Israel which is the principal source of

instability in the Middle East. Israel is backed by the U.S. through billions of dollars in direct aid, military assistance, preferential trade deals and diplomatic cover.

Official U.S. statistics say that nearly 4,500 Pentagon soldiers have been killed in Iraq. While at the same time up to a million or more Iraqis have died although these figures have never been acknowledged by the Pentagon. Efforts to destabilize Iraq continue on a daily basis. (See [this](#))

A report from Reuters on July 20 illustrates that:

“A suicide bomber killed at least 35 people and wounded dozens in a crowded market in the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad on Monday, the eve of the Eid al-Adha festival, security and hospital sources said. More than 60 people were wounded, a police source said. Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack, the group’s Nasheer news agency said on Telegram. It said one of its militants blew up his explosive vest among the crowds. Hospital sources said the death toll could rise as some of the wounded were in critical condition.” (See [this](#))

In neighboring Syria, the U.S. backed attempt to stage a “color revolution” starting in 2011 has failed to dislodge the Arab Baath Socialist Party (ABSP) government led by President Bashar al-Assad. Under the administration of President Barack Obama, U.S. troops were sent into Syria while periodic bombing operations were carried out. Millions of Syrians and Iraqis have been dislocated as internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

During the latter period of the administration of President Donald Trump, U.S. troops were moved to areas surrounding the Syrian oil fields. Reports suggest that the resources from the oil fields are being expropriated and that funds are being utilized to finance the so-called Syrian Democratic Front (SADF), a Kurdish militia ostensibly fighting against both Turkey and the government in Damascus.

Under the current Democratic administration of President Joe Biden, the occupation and bombing of Syria and Iraq continues. On June 28, the [Wall Street Journal reported](#):

The U.S. conducted airstrikes in Syria and Iraq against two Iranian-backed militias that the Pentagon said were mounting drone attacks against U.S. troops. The Pentagon said operational and weapons-storage facilities had been struck near the Syria-Iraq border at three locations that it said had been used by the Kata’ib Hezbollah and Kata’ib Sayyid al-Shuhada militia groups.”

The Syrian and Iraqis governments have both asked the U.S. and its allies to withdraw their forces from the region. Why are U. S. troops still in Iraq and Syria? They were not invited by any government in these countries which have served for decades.

Impact of Pentagon Funding and War Policy on the Workers and Oppressed in the U.S.

Conditions for most people in the U.S. have continued to decline since the period after the conclusion of the occupation of Vietnam and Southeast Asia in 1975. Infrastructural decline within the urban and suburban areas have resulted in depopulation of the cities and their later partial gentrification. Municipal financing has been hampered by the obligations to the banks, bonding firms and stock rating agencies. The conditions placed upon municipalities in exchange for credit and bond issuances are inherently designed to further the exploitation and oppression of the working class.

Although the U.S. has stated repeatedly that their objectives for invading and occupying geo-political regions is to restore social stability and democracy. Nonetheless, within the U.S., millions are victimized by the criminal justice system utilizing the police, prosecutors, judges, jails, prisons and the intensifying militarization of education and law-enforcement. Many of the same crowd control tactical weapons utilized abroad are being deployed against the Black Lives Matter protests which have swept the U.S. since the spring and summer of 2020.

Climate change and its impact cannot be adequately address amid a continuing pre-occupation with imperialist conquest and domination by Washington and Wall Street. The capitalist and imperialist system based in the U.S. are the source of most of the turmoil in the world in the 21st century. Therefore, people in the U.S. have a pivotal role to play in improving the social conditions of the majority domestically and on a global scale.

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[America's "War on Terrorism"](#)



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In this new and expanded edition of Michel Chossudovsky's 2002 best seller, the author blows away the smokescreen put up by the mainstream media, that 9/11 was an attack on America by "Islamic terrorists". Through meticulous research, the author uncovers a military-intelligence ploy behind the September 11 attacks, and the cover-up and complicity of key members of the Bush Administration.

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According to Chossudovsky, the "war on terrorism" is a complete fabrication based on the illusion that one man, Osama bin Laden, outwitted the \$40 billion-a-year American intelligence apparatus. The "war on terrorism" is a war of conquest. Globalisation is the final march to the "New World Order", dominated by Wall Street and the U.S. military-industrial complex.

September 11, 2001 provides a justification for waging a war without borders. Washington's agenda consists in extending the frontiers of the American Empire to facilitate complete U.S. corporate control, while installing within America the institutions of the Homeland Security

State.

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