

What the Iraq war is about

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

The Bush Regime has quagmired America into a sixth year of war in Afghanistan and Iraq with no end in sight. The cost of these wars of aggression is horrendous. Official US combat casualties stand at 4,538 dead. Officially, 29,780 US troops have been wounded in Iraq. Experts have argued that these numbers are understatements. Regardless, these numbers are only the tip of the iceberg.

On April 17, 2008, AP News [reported](#) that a new study released by the RAND Corporation concludes that "some 300,000 U.S. troops are suffering from major depression or post traumatic stress from serving in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and 320,000 received brain injuries."

On April 23, 2008, Online Journal [reported](#) that an internal email from Gen. Michael J. Kussman, undersecretary for health at the Veterans Administration, to Ira Katz, head of mental health at the VA, confirms a [McClatchy Newspaper report](#) that 126 veterans per week commit [suicide](#). To the extent that the suicides are attributable to the war, more than 500 deaths should be added to the reported combat fatalities each month.

Turning to Iraqi deaths, expert studies support as many as 1.2 million dead Iraqis, almost entirely civilians. Another 2 million Iraqis have fled their country, and there are 2 million displaced Iraqis within Iraq.

Afghan casualties are unknown.

Both Afghanistan and Iraq have suffered unconscionable civilian deaths and damage to housing, infrastructure and environment. Iraq is afflicted with depleted uranium and open sewers.

Then there are the economic costs to the US. Nobel economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates the full cost of the invasion and attempted occupation of Iraq to be between \$3 trillion and \$5 trillion. The dollar price of oil and gasoline have tripled, and the dollar has lost value against other currencies, declining dramatically even against the lowly Thai baht. Before Bush launched his wars of aggression, one US dollar was worth 45 baht. Today the dollar is only worth 30 baht.

The US cannot afford these costs. Prior to his resignation last month, US Comptroller General David Walker [reported](#) that the accumulated unfunded liabilities of the US government total 53 trillion dollars. The US government cannot cover these liabilities. The Bush Regime even has to borrow the money from foreigners to pay for its wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is no more certain way to bankrupt the country and dethrone the dollar as the world reserve currency.

The moral costs are perhaps the highest. All of the deaths, injuries, and economic costs to the US and its victims are due entirely to lies told by the president and vice president of the US, by the secretary of defense, the national security advisor, the secretary of state, and, of course, by the media, including the “liberal” *New York Times*. All of these lies were uttered in behalf of an undeclared agenda. “Our” government has still not told “we the people” the real reasons “our” government invaded Afghanistan and Iraq.

Instead, the American sheeple have accepted a succession of transparent lies: weapons of mass destruction, al Qaeda connections and complicity in the 9/11 attack, overthrowing a dictator and “bringing democracy” to Iraqis.

The great moral American people would rather believe government lies than to acknowledge the government’s crimes and to hold the government accountable.

There are many effective ways in which a moral people could protest. Consider investors, for example. Clearly Halliburton and military suppliers are cleaning up. Investors flock to the stocks in order to participate in the rise in value from booming profits. But what would a moral people do? Wouldn’t they boycott the stocks of the companies that are profiting from the Bush Regime’s war crimes?

If the US invaded Iraq for any of the succession of reasons the Bush Regime has given, why would the US have spent \$750 million on a fortress “embassy” with anti-missile systems and its own electricity and water systems spread over 104 acres? No one has ever seen or heard of such an embassy before. Clearly, this “embassy” is constructed as the headquarters of an occupying colonial ruler.

The fact is that Bush invaded Iraq with the intent of turning Iraq into an American colony. The so-called government of al-Maliki is not a government. Maliki is the well-paid front man for US colonial rule. Maliki’s government does not exist outside the protected Green Zone, the headquarters of the American occupation.

If colonial rule were not the intent, the US would not be going out of its way to force al Sadr’s 60,000 man militia into a fight. Sadr is a Shi’ite who is a real Iraqi leader, perhaps the only Iraqi who could end the sectarian conflict and restore some unity to Iraq. As such he is regarded by the Bush Regime as a danger to the American puppet Maliki. Unless the US is able to purchase or rig the upcoming Iraqi election, Sadr is likely to emerge as the dominant figure. This would be a highly unfavorable development for the Bush Regime’s hopes of establishing its colonial rule behind the facade of a Maliki fake democracy. Rather than work with Sadr in order to extract themselves from a quagmire, the Americans will be doing everything possible to assassinate Sadr.

Why does the Bush Regime want to rule Iraq? Some speculate that it is a matter of “peak oil.” Oil supplies are said to be declining even as demand for oil multiplies from developing countries such as China. According to this argument, the US decided to seize Iraq to insure its own oil supply.

This explanation is problematic. Most US oil comes from Canada, Mexico, and Venezuela. The best way for the US to insure its oil supplies would be to protect the dollar’s role as the world reserve currency. Moreover, \$3-5 trillion would have purchased a tremendous amount of oil. Prior to the US invasions, the US oil import bill was running less than \$100 billion per year. Even in 2006 total US imports from OPEC countries was \$145 billion, and the US trade

deficit with OPEC totaled \$106 billion. Three trillion dollars could have paid for US oil imports for 30 years; 5 trillion dollars could pay the US oil bill for a half century had the Bush Regime preserved a sound dollar.

The more likely explanation for the US invasion of Iraq is the [neoconservative](#) Bush Regime's commitment to the defense of Israeli territorial expansion. There is no such thing as a neoconservative who is not allied with Israel. Israel hopes to steal all of the West Bank and southern Lebanon for its territorial expansion. An American colonial regime in Iraq not only buttresses Israel from attack, but also can pressure Syria and Iran from giving support to the Palestinians and Lebanese. The Iraqi war is a war for Israeli territorial expansion. Americans are dying and bleeding to death financially for Israel. Bush's "war on terror" is a hoax that serves to cover US intervention in the Middle East in behalf of "greater Israel."

Paul Craig Roberts [[email him](#)] was Assistant Secretary of the Treasury during President Reagan's first term. He was Associate Editor of the Wall Street Journal. He has held numerous academic appointments, including the William E. Simon Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies, Georgetown University, and Senior Research Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University. He was awarded the Legion of Honor by French President Francois Mitterrand. He is the author of [Supply-Side Revolution : An Insider's Account of Policymaking in Washington](#); [Alienation and the Soviet Economy](#) and [Meltdown: Inside the Soviet Economy](#), and is the co-author with Lawrence M. Stratton of [The Tyranny of Good Intentions : How Prosecutors and Bureaucrats Are Trampling the Constitution in the Name of Justice](#). Click [here](#) for Peter Brimelow's Forbes Magazine interview with Roberts about the recent epidemic of prosecutorial misconduct.

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