

Five Years of Occupation, Destruction, and Resistance in Iraq

On March 20, 2003 approximately 165,000 United States and British troops, bombed their way into the initial invasion of Iraq. Ten days later, George W. Bush proudly declared, “Mission Accomplished”. While the U.S. and U.K. governments defied the largest coordinated protests in human history, where at least 12 million people protested against invasion on February 15, 2003, they have no longer been able to deny the deepening crisis of their occupation. Five years later and under US occupation Iraq is spiraling into

**The High Price of War**  
Economists Linda Bilmes of Harvard and Nobel laureate and former chief World Bank economist Joseph Stiglitz recently dropped a political bombshell when they estimated the direct costs of war for the US at \$1 trillion since the war began, and \$3 trillion when the long terms costs of

WORLD AGAINST AG WAR!

healthcare and disability payments are calculated. Not only that, they estimate the occupation as costs the rest of the world the same amount. The U.S military is now spending directly \$12 billion a month on the occupation of Iraq, and yes the people of Iraq are still homeless and starving? What about the at least 50 million Americans without health insurance, or the bare minimum of 36.5 million living below the poverty line? What are the real priorities of the U.S. government? Certainly not humanity.

**Lies, Lies, Lies**  
One by one, the lies the justified the occupation were exposed.

- 1. “Weapons of Mass Destruction” (WMD)? In January 2005, the Iraq Survey Group concluded that Iraq had had no WMD at the time of the invasion.
- 2. Terrorist links to the government? The U.S. military’s first and only study looking into ties between Saddam Hussein’s Iraq and al Qaeda showed no connection between the two.

**Occupation is Destruction**  
The facts on the ground again disprove the biggest lie of all – that the invasion of Iraq was in the best interests of both Iraqis, and people worldwide. Major news media has been forced to cover the findings of the British ORB polling agency, that over 1 million Iraqis have already been. According to the UN Human Rights Commission (UNHRC), over 60,000 Iraqis are forced to leave their homes every month, totaling more than 4.2 million.

Ryan Cocker, US Ambassador to Iraq, admitted that most Iraqis have electricity for 1 to 2 hours a day and CNN has even now reported that 70% are without access to adequate water supplies.



**World Against War!**  
Over 160,000 troops and 126,000 private security forces continue to occupy Iraq. 3 trillion dollars and almost 4,000 US troop deaths later, and they are still no closer to controlling the country and dominating its people. From this we must know that people in Iraq are fighting the occupation, and resisting imperialist attempts to turn their country into another military base in their competition for control of the world’s resources.

5 years later, and the people of Iraq continue to demand an end to the occupation of their country. 5 years later, and as the human and economic costs skyrocket, it has become even more important to support their call for an end to the occupation of Iraq. The world has the power to say no to war, and if we unite, also the power to end it!

**US/UK OUT OF IRAQ!  
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR IRAQI PEOPLE!**

**AFGHANISTAN:**  
Government of Canada Votes for Extension of Destruction and Occupation

On Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Canada passed a motion in Parliament to extend Canada’s war in Afghanistan for two more years. The decision was based on a recommendation from the Government of Canada’s so-called Independent Advisory Panel on Afghanistan (a panel hand-picked by right-wing Conservative Party leader and Prime Minister of Canada Stephen Harper) to extend the mission. After weeks of debate among the political parties in Parliament, the Conservatives and the Liberals (the two biggest parties in Parliament) agreed on the motion to extend the mission. The New Democratic Party (NDP) and the Bloc Quebecois both voted against the motion.

However, despite all the debate, the disagreement between parties is not so much a disagreement on whether or not Canadian troops should be in Afghanistan, simply in what way the occupation should be continued. In the interest of being able to continue the occupation, the Conservatives and the Liberals put aside their differences on the strategy of the mission to agree that the occupation would continue forward with an increased focus on “reconstruction” and training of Afghan military and police. In practice, this will not change anything about the character of the occupation or how many Afghans Canadian soldiers are killing. The NDP, although they voted against the extension of the mission, support Canadian Forces participating in a UN-mandated “peacekeeping” mission. Again,



this in practice would not mean much difference in the lives of Afghan people - occupation is occupation, whether the occupiers’ helmets are green or blue.

So what does the extension of Canada’s occupation really mean for people in Afghanistan? It means two more years of plunder, two more years of destruction, and two more years of fighting back against the Canada/NATO occupation. Since the 2001 invasion, Canada’s “achievements in Afghanistan” include:

- Life expectancy decreased by 4 years, to 42 (CBC)
- Afghanistan becoming the supplier of 90% of the world’s opium (World Health Organization)
- A rapidly expanding epidemic of AIDS, a disease not found in Afghanistan before 2001.
- A rate of domestic violence against women that has increased by 40% since March 2007 alone. (United Nations)

By all counts, conditions of life in Afghanistan have deteriorated massively. The Taliban, the most organized group in Afghanistan resisting

the occupation, are growing in size and support. Seven years of occupation have not brought the promised “freedom” and “democracy” to people in Afghanistan. Two more years of occupation will only be another setback for Afghan people.

As ordinary peace-loving people in Canada, we must demand an end to this cruel war drive. We will see thousands more Afghans die this year at the hands of Canada and NATO, and more than likely we will see the 100<sup>th</sup> Canadian soldier die in Afghanistan as well. And yet the Government of Canada has extended its war drive yet again without the consultation of ordinary poor and working people in this country. We must call for an Independent Public Inquiry into Canada’s war drive in Afghanistan, to ask why \$7 billion taxpayer dollars have been spent on a criminal war that is being carried out without public consultation or debate. Now more than ever, it is time for us to mobilize, time for us to fight and demand:

Canada/NATO Out of Afghanistan NOW!  
Independent Public Inquiry NOW!

**Sanctions Against Iran:  
A Colonial Tool\***

Once again the Bush administration is leading the pack to impose a third round of sanctions on Iran although Tehran has cooperated with the IAEA.

Sanctions are an alternative to military force. By punishing a nation economically, socially, and/or politically, it is hoped that change will be affected without the prohibitive cost of war.



The current policies directed at isolating and undermining the government have in reality helped to weaken the social and economic institutions which the country requires if it is to become a viable democracy.

Neoconservatives persist in their message that ‘our ally Israel’ must be safeguarded from the Iranian threat, and for this purpose, a third round of sanctions must be imposed on Iran to prevent them from building a nuclear weapon. The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany have agreed on a draft resolution for a third round of sanctions against Iran. It would seem that the perception of threat is misplaced given that Israel is so well-prepared to protect herself – with Germany’s help.

Meanwhile, the country that is a signatory to the NPT and one which is now facing sanctions for abiding by Article IV of the NPT and being a threat to world peace for having future intentions, has made curious technological advances of its own that must surely be a threat to those who have hijacked the spirit of ‘Atoms for Peace’.

The colonial powers owed their ability to control to the power of “mystification”. This included the superior arms and medicine which they thought automatically extends to the culture of the ‘mysterious’ colonizers. The mindset persists today. Iran has broken the cycle which sounds a loud alarm in those quarters where the existence of certain groups depends on the subjugation of fellow human beings.

No doubt sanctions and war are emotional issues; when America was led to an illegal war against sovereign Iraq, our emotions played a great role. Fear subjugated our common sense, altruism – the desire to give the people of Iraq a chance at liberty, misled us into believing the lies we were told. Liberty cost millions of lives. Today, we are being asked to live in fear of Iran. A nation that in spite of limited resources and isolation has expended so much of its resources to finding innovative ways to improve and enhance life, while our own government spends billions building weapons of mass destruction and fighting wars, or assisting countries that wish to engage in war. We have to ask ourselves: “Which is the nation with a heart?”

*\*Soraya Sepahpour-Ulrich is a peace activist, essayist and public speaker. This article is an excerpt from a longer article on the CASMII website (campaigniran.org).*

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For location, please visit our website:  
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