

The US Lied About How Many Troops Are in Iraq— Time to Get Them All Out!

March 21,
2025

22 Years After the Invasion

Twenty-two years ago in March, 2003, the US launched an invasion and occupation of Iraq. While it has been planned and stated several times that US troops will leave Iraq, it was public knowledge 2500 troops were still there as of the end of 2021. In December, 2024, after the fall of the Assad regime in Syria, it was revealed the number was much higher.

Below is a timeline of US intervention in Iraq, followed by facts about related US military actions.

A TIMELINE OF US INTERVENTION IN IRAQ

August 1990: After the US Ambassador tells Iraq America has “no interest in their Arab-Arab dispute,” Iraq invades Kuwait. This led to the imposition of one of the most stringent set of economic sanctions in history, devastating Iraq, and a build-up of US troops in the area.

1991: On January 16, the US launched “Operation Desert Storm,” destroying much of Iraq’s infrastructure and killing thousands of people. The shooting war ended in late February, but the sanctions remained in place. Some criticized President George H.W. Bush for not advancing all the way to Baghdad.

1991-2003: The US continued the sanctions and bombed Iraq to enforce a “no-fly zone,” killing hundreds of thousands more people.

1996: 60 Minutes asked Secretary of State Madeleine Albright about a reported half million children dying due to sanctions, which Albright said was “worth the price.”

2001: After the events of 9/11 in the USA, which by all accounts had nothing to do with Iraq (and involved more Saudi nationals than any other country), President George W. Bush sought to finish his father’s war.

2002: Congress voted on an Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) against Iraq based on false assertions of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). This authorization is still on the books

2003: The US invasion and occupation began with a “shock and awe” bombing campaign which caused more devastation to the already impoverished Iraq. After Saddam Hussein was deposed, the US built the world’s largest embassy in Baghdad.

2011: After “surges” and other US military interference as Iraq faced internal factional warfare, President Barack Obama withdrew all but 2500 troops from the country.

2014: With the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS)— founded mostly by people radicalized by the US invasion and occupation— Obama sent thousands more troops back into Iraq.

2017: President Donald Trump stepped up the bombing, destroying most of the Iraqi city of Mosul, leading to the fall of ISIS.

January 2020: Trump ordered the assassination in Iraq of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, leading to a vote by the Iraqi Parliament to eject all US troops.

2021: President Joe Biden agrees to withdraw most US troops— except for 2500 of them (Military.com, December 9, 2021).

August 2024: 230 members of the Oregon National Guard were sent to Iraq and Syria (KTVZ, August 10).

December 2024: After the fall of Assad in Syria, the US reveals there were 2000 troops there all along, not 900 as previously stated, and more than 2500 have been in Iraq for some time. The exact number of troops in Iraq was not released for “security and diplomatic considerations” (Al Arabiya.net, December 23).

February 2025: Although the Iraqi government has stated they might ask the US to remain due to concerns with the instability in Syria and possible resurgence of ISIS, they also stated the agreed-upon schedule to have all US troops leave by September 2025 is still expected to go as planned (Rudaw, February 17).

ONGOING WARS SINCE 9/11

In addition to the US presence (and continued occasional bombings) in Iraq, other countries continue being bombed by American drones and aircraft. Most of these military actions are being justified under the 2001 AUMF which was targeting those responsible for 9/11 — and most have no direct connection whatsoever. For example, Somalia has been hit at least 10 times in 2025, seven of which happened under President Trump (Hiraan Somalia News, March 5).

Also a target of the “war on terror,” the US ramped up its bombings of Yemen in early 2024 as the Houthi faction attacked ships in the Red Sea, in response to Israel’s disproportionate response to Hamas in Gaza. *(continued on other side)*



Get All the Troops Out of Iraq!

3/21/25

(continued)

After the January ceasefire in Gaza, no US strikes took place until Trump ordered multiple bombings of Yemen on March 15, which killed 31 people (Associated Press, March 16).

The US presence in Syria, which began in 2014 without United Nations or Congressional authorization, includes multiple military bases in the oil-rich northeast. America continued bombings despite Assad no longer running Syria. US Central Command reported one such strike killed a “senior Al Qaeda leader” on February 23 (Centcom.mil, March 1).

The US began two other wars following 9/11 — the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan in 2001 and the bombing of Libya in 2011, which led to a still-unstable political situation in that country. US troops appear to have completely withdrawn from Afghanistan in 2021. No US military attacks have been reported in Libya in recent years. Similarly, the US has not bombed Pakistan, one of the most-bombed nations following 9/11, since 2018.

IRAQ, ISRAEL, PALESTINE, LEBANON, AND IRAN (AND THE US)

There is a tendency for Americans to describe the Houthis in Yemen, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza as “Iran-backed.” Yet it’s rare to see a description of the Israeli government, which receives \$3 billion in US aid yearly (mostly military aid)— a number which increased dramatically after Hamas’ attack on Israel in October 2023— as “US-backed.” Many of the bombs dropped by Israel, which led to over 48,000 deaths in Gaza alone, are US-made or funded. The US tacitly allowed the attacks to continue by not cutting off aid while Israel bombed civilians and blocked humanitarian aid. Israel opened a second front in Lebanon, leading to a ceasefire agreement in December which Israel has repeatedly violated. Immediately following the Gaza ceasefire in January, the Israelis stepped up their attacks in the West Bank, where over 900 people have been killed since 2023. At least 110 of those people died since January and 20,000 have been forced to flee their homes (New Arab, March 4). Israel unilaterally ended the Gaza ceasefire agreement in mid-March, killing at least 400 people in one night (Associated Press, March 18).

The Iraqi government has brought in people from Gaza and Lebanon for medical aid due to attacks by Israel (New Arab, June 6 and September 25). There is a saying that there will be no peace in the Middle East until the Israel/Palestine conflict is resolved and that occupation is ended.

Iraq continues to have an arrest warrant out for President Trump for his assassination of General Soleimani. President Trump unilaterally ended the so-called “nuclear agreement” with Iran in 2018 and in January 2025 stepped up sanctions on that nation, ostensibly to stop them from obtaining a nuclear weapon. Yet Trump himself noted Iran’s leaders do not want nuclear weapons (Responsible Statecraft, February 4), echoing ongoing assessments by American intelligence agencies for years (NBC, October 8).

THE US AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

President Trump has taken an aggressive new position for the US in Ukraine. That stance helps justify countries taking land by force, which should not be happening in the 21st Century. While previous US policy was to support a nuclear-armed power (Israel) occupying a less-well-funded/armed territory (Palestine), it took the opposite stance on Russia’s invasion/occupation of Ukraine. The tens of billions of dollars the US has spent on supporting Ukraine militarily have contributed to the escalation of that war. Now Trump seems to side with Russia and blames Ukraine for starting the war. While it’s true Ukraine was seeking membership in NATO—a development the US knew was unacceptable to Russia, it was Russia who fired the first shots.

America also continues to impose sanctions and make military threats against Iraq’s neighbor, Iran, alleging Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons. As recently as October 2024, the CIA stated Iran is not building nuclear arms (NBC, October 7). American ally Israel has occupied the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights since 1967 and itself has dozens of undeclared nuclear weapons. The US has also chosen to move many of its military assets in order to confront China and Russia rather than maintain troops the Middle East (the so-called “pivot to Asia”), including sending warships through the strait of Taiwan and into the Black Sea, actions seen as provocative.

WASTEFUL USE OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, has been decimating government agencies and firing thousands of workers in the name of fiscal responsibility. Yet all of these cuts have been aimed at agencies which might actually help people, promote health and save the environment. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who was plucked from Fox News for his job, says the military’s main mission is “lethality.” The US defense budget is nearly \$900 billion, and the recently passed bill to stop a government shutdown added another \$100 billion to that bloated number. The true waste is in diverting taxpayer money to weapons of war. US military spending is the highest in the world and is larger than the next ten nations combined (including Russia and China).

CONCLUSION

Iraqis have been subject to US interference by war, sanctions and occupation since August,



1990. Iraq’s infrastructure has never fully recovered from the 1991 “Gulf War,” the 2003 invasion and other American-led actions. Even if the US does completely remove its troops in September, American influence remains. Its large embassy makes no sense— Iraq is the 36th largest country by population and 58th largest in size.

Iraq has not been free from US interference by war, sanctions and other means for nearly 35 years. The US must end its attempts to undermine Iraq’s sovereignty once and for all.

This flyer was prepared
in March, 2025 by the

Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group

**PO Box 42456
Portland, OR 97242
(503) 236-3065**

Meetings usually 2nd Mondays, 5 PM; next one is April 14.

**iraq@pjw.info
www.pjw.info/Iraq.html**
Contact us about our meetings!