

The Illegal United States and Allied Invasion of Iraq & Syria Reaches Crisis Point

By [James O'Neill](#)

Global Research, April 14, 2020

[New Eastern Outlook](#) 9 April 2020

Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#), [Military and WMD](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The onset of the coronavirus has had a number of consequences in the health and livelihoods of millions of people. There has however, been another consequence that is little remarked upon, and that is the almost total disappearance from the news cycle of the ongoing wars in Syria and Iraq.

The western media have long ignored their presumed obligation to report fairly and accurately on matters of significant importance. This is nowhere more obvious than in the ongoing Middle East conflicts.

In 2003, fresh from the illegal invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 (now a war in its 20th year and still the subject of sustained misinformation and outright lying) the United States and its allies manufactured a crisis regarding Iraq. This time it was Saddam Hussein's "weapons of mass destruction" that allegedly threatened the lives and safety of all of the democracy loving west.

Iraq was invaded by the United States, supported inter alia, by its loyal Australian acolyte who has never seen an example of United States aggression, invasions and sanctions since 1945 of which it disapproved.

Iraq of course had no "weapons of mass destruction". That should have been the occasion for heartfelt apologies, reparation for the death and destruction caused, and a rapid withdrawal. In a different world perhaps.

Five years ago the United States and its allies decided that President Assad of Syria's time was up and yet another invasion of a sovereign nation was undertaken. This time the pretext was varied. Assad had "lost control of his country", was "incapable of defeating the terrorists" ravaging his country, and "killing his own citizens".

The pretext here was a little known and highly dubious legal concept of "right to protect". It was to be invoked, solely by western nations, to protect the citizens of countries where their own governments were allegedly incapable of doing so.

That the terrorists concerned were armed and financed by the same western powers (together with their hangers on like Saudi Arabia and Israel) was not to be mentioned in polite company. Five years later the Syrian terrorists are on the verge of defeat, thanks in no small part to the intervention of Syria's real friends, Russia, Iran and Hezbollah from the Lebanon.

The Americans initially set up a number of military bases in Syria (as they had done in Iraq) and militarily opposed any attempts by the legitimate Syrian government to exercise any form of control over these bases. Such was the utter contempt shown by the western forces under United States control for Syria's sovereignty they did not even bother to try and justify their intervention in legal terms. Such a justification would in any case have no foundation in law.

Also of significance was the fact that one of the areas of Syria that the United States forces controlled was Syria's oil producing region. United States actions went beyond mere control and exclusion of the rightful sovereign government. They produced oil from those oilfields and exported it, retaining the income thereby produced.

There could be few examples of more blatant and illegal theft of a country's resources. If there is one good thing to emerge from this fiasco it is that we are no longer inflicted with the claim that this is all done in the name of a "duty to protect".

In fact, as far as the Australian parliament and the Australian media are concerned, it is difficult to detect anything at all. That country's ongoing involvement in three wars, the longest now approaching two decades in total, rarely rates a mention in the national parliament. As for debate? It is now 10 years since Australia's involvement in the Afghanistan war was last the subject of a Parliamentary debate. The Labor Opposition initially objected to the country's involvement in the Iraq invasion and occupation but in their six years of government between 2008 and 2014 did absolutely nothing to withdraw Australian troops from that country.

As for Syria, it remains the great unmentionable. Were the Australian parliament to actually manifest some degree of principle and integrity and withdraw their troops from United States initiated wars, who knows what terrible retribution might follow. The memory of Prime Minister Whitlam's fate in 1975 when he planned to close the United States spy base at Pine Gap in the Northern Territory still holds successive Australian governments in thrall.

Then, in early 2020 a newly quasi-independent Iraqi government recovered a degree of courage and integrity and unanimously passed a resolution demanding the exit of uninvited foreign troops. This was clearly directed at the United States and its hangers on like Australia.

The Australian government's response was a stunned silence. The Defence and Foreign Ministries both stalled for time, clearly waiting for guidance from their United States masters. When the American government announced that it had no intention of leaving Iraq, the Australian government regained its voice and indicated that it too would remain for the foreseeable future. We are still awaiting an explanation from the Australian government how they reconcile this decision with their professed adherence to the international rule of law they are so fond of quoting.

There was also a deafening silence from the mainstream media and the battery of political commentators whose adherence to the United States view of the world was cruelly exposed for the umpteenth time. Whatever happened to the rule of law? Here was a sovereign government, duly elected, asserting that it made the rules for its own country and being studiously ignored and its wishes disregarded.

The Iraqis did not accept the rebuttal of their legitimate demands. A number of significant

events have occurred in recent weeks, but as noted above, the morbidity and mortality figures for the coronavirus have vastly reduced the reporting of competing headlines for matters like war, peace, and the rights of sovereign governments.

The United States has been forced to close, at last count, eight of their Iraqi military bases. This does not equate with a withdrawal, but rather a consolidation in a fewer number of heavily guarded bases. Even those are not immune from attack by a variety of local groups that have mounted increasingly sophisticated and well-armed attacks upon these fortresses.

The United States response has been an increase in aerial attacks with resulting civilian casualties, as well as the military forces of the Iraqi government whom they profess to be there to support. The Americans have almost entirely ceased non-aerial military operations, recognising that local hostility to their continued presence has reached such a level that it is unsafe for them to venture beyond their remaining heavily fortified bases.

The propaganda war continues unabated. The problems the United States and its allies are facing in Iraq are all the fault, it is alleged, of the Iranians. That the Iranian forces are in Iraq at the specific invitation of, and with the support of, the legitimate Iraqi government, is not recognised by the western media who continue to unfailingly portray Iran in a negative light.

Those same western media outlets actually fail to comprehend the illogicality and stupidity of railing against foreign forces in Iraq when the fundamental cause of the fighting is the continuing aftermath of an illegal invasion 17 years ago; the theft of the country's natural resources by the unwelcome and unwanted invaders; and the blatant refusal of those invaders to obey the legitimate demands of the sovereign Iraqi government.

The message from the Iraqi government could not be clearer. You are not welcome. Pack up and leave.

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James O'Neill is an Australian-based Barrister at Law, exclusively for the online magazine ["New Eastern Outlook"](#).

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