

Iraq Needs an Independent Government, Not ‘Training’

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Will US occupation troops really leave Iraq? That’s the question that Washington is so far unable to answer. The White House says the official date of the long goodbye is this month, August 2021.

Donald Trump announced a pullout of US troops while still in office but his deadline was simply ignored by the new Biden administration which has also been under mounting pressure to end the two-decade US occupation of Mesopotamia. Left wing Democrats wanted a full end to the war the US has waged since 2003. Right-wing Republicans, blissfully unaware of Mideast realities, urged more troops be sent to Iraq.

After losing some 4,431 troops and 8,000 mercenaries (aka ‘contractors’) and 1,145 troops from allied nations dragooned into the Iraq conflict, and 31,994 wounded – many with serious head wounds from roadside bombs – Washington switched gears in Iraq and adopted the old British Imperial system of colonial rule.

The Britain Empire created Iraq in the 1920’s from the wreckage of the dying Ottoman Empire to secure possession of Mesopotamia’s abundant oil. At the time, the mighty Royal Navy was converting from coal to oil. Iraq became Britain’s vast fuel depot.

A new figurehead king from the Hashemite tribes was put into power by London, backed by a local constabulary, British garrison troops and, most effectively, the Royal Air Force.

In the 1920’s, Winston Churchill approved RAF fighters to bomb restive Arab and Kurdish tribes with mustard gas and poisonous Yperite. The British eventually crushed domestic resistance in Iraq while shamelessly denouncing fascist Italy for also using poison gas against Libyan nationalist rebels.

The RAF bombed and staffed rebellious Iraqis right up to the late 1940’s. British air power played a key role in crushing the nationalist uprising in Iraq by Rashid Ali, who was smeared a pro-fascist by Britain’s imperial press.

The US eventually adopted the low-cost British colonial system for ruling Iraq. US warplanes were stationed at up to six former Iraqi airbases, becoming the principal enforcer of the occupation. US troops were thinned out. By 2020, this job was done so skillfully that the US presence in Iraq became almost invisible.

Iraq was occupied by western forces but it looked like an independent nation with a US-installed president and executive branch. Kurdish areas in the north became virtual US-run mini-states. The demented ISIS movement was totally stamped out by US airpower and Iranian militias. As a thank you, the Iranian military supremo in Iraq, Gen. Qasem Soleimani, was ordered murdered by President Trump after being lured to Iraq for supposed peace talks.

Iraq was one of the most advanced states in the Arab world and a US ally – before 1991. Today, it lies in ruins, smashed to pieces by US airpower, civil wars, and sectarian conflict.

President George W. Bush was convinced by militarists, notably Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld, after intense pressure from pro-Israel groups in the US and their media accomplices, to invade Iraq. The Washington hawks planned to use US-occupied Iraq as a central base for dominating the entire Mideast and grabbing its oil.

The golden victory in Iraq promised by the neocons turned to ashes, leaving Washington stuck deep in an ungovernable ruined nation that had even to import oil. At one point, the off-the-rails neocons in Washington even claimed Iraq had a fleet of ships in the Atlantic Ocean carrying ‘killer’ drones that were about to attack sleeping America.

Iraq was so battered and demolished after three decades of bombing and wars that it was worth almost nothing. Faced by the threat of more guerilla warfare, the new older, wiser US administration of Joe Biden announced it would pull all remaining US combat troops from Iraq, but leaving 2,500 behind for ‘training’ and embassy security (the heavily fortified US Baghdad Embassy is one of the biggest in the world). Osama bin Laden called the US embassies in Baghdad and Kabul, ‘modern crusader castles.’

‘Training’ is a bad joke. Iraq has been at almost constant war since 1980. Iraqis need loyalty, pride and patriotism to be effective fighters. Who needs training from the armed forces that got whipped in Vietnam and now Afghanistan? Iraq needs a real national government rather than a bunch of corrupt stooges and foreign agents in Baghdad. President Saddam Hussein predicted that the US would face the ‘mother of all battles’ in Iraq. He was right.

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