

There Is No Marshall Plan for Iraq. The Cruel Legacy of America's War Machine

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

Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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

*On June 5, 1947, in an address at [Harvard University](#), **Secretary of State George C. Marshall** introduced a European self-help program financed by the United States to the tune of 13 billion dollars (about \$110 billion by 2018 estimates), and more than 16 European nations accepted the money to jumpstart their economy, What no one ever talks about is that the Marshall Plan hugely benefited the American economy as well. ¹*

Most of that money would be used to buy goods from the United States, and they had to be shipped across the Atlantic on American merchant vessels. So the US saw this as a win-win situation where they could financially help European nations while (in their minds) stop the march of Communism across the landscape, and money could be made all around. After all, the US doesn't do anything for free. The country prospered, as companies were able to find markets in Europe and sell their products.² And who paid for all of this? Why the American taxpayer, of course, convinced that we would stop Communism if we agreed to this huge payout.

It was successful for its time. Many of those countries in Europe who benefited became the founding members of the EU some 50 years later.

But there is no "Marshall Plan for Iraq. In fact, there is no Marshall plan for the Middle East." It is to the benefit of the current axis of evil, the US/Israel/Saudi triumverate to keep the Middle East in constant uproar.

It doesn't take long to see what the US has done to Iraq. You just have to go and spend time there. For me, it was teaching Reconciliation English for five weeks in Najaf, Iraq, a conservative Shia city where Muqtadā al-Ṣadr³ lives in an encampment so heavily guarded, it almost looked like the behemoth that is called 'the American Embassy,' in Iraq, one of the ugliest and most intimidating places I visited while there.

There is debris in the streets and on the sidewalks everywhere, and people just walk around it, seeming not to see it any longer. Some days, there is no sun, only a mazed look of orange dust that shimmers straight out of a 'Mad Max' scene. When it rained the three days I was there, the sky actually turned blue for a few hours and the air smelled of rain and sweetness before the dust came back in and covered everything. The cars, the shops, the outdoor cafés, the kid's playgrounds; everything is covered in dust. And it's not the 'OK... they are close to a desert, dust.' It's sticky, yellow grit.

The electricity goes off and on, and the Iraqis just smile and say, "give it 20 minutes and the

private generators will kick in. It's more expensive, but what can we do?" There are wires everywhere, hanging from poles just above the heads of pedestrians, but it seems to work.

The water can't be drunk, except the poorer Iraqis do drink it. If at all possible, people buy water or have a filter system in their homes. Sami, the founder of the school for Reconciliation English, gives people a demonstration every time a visitor from out of Iraq comes, to show them what the water looks like. The US war machine has poisoned the water sources. For example, pollution in the Tigris river (the other main river is the Euphrates, and that's not much better, as oil wastes are pouring into it) is the result of Iraqi and US military waste. The river is contaminated with war waste and toxins, and residents of smaller impoverished cities are often left with no alternative but to drink it.⁴

And then there is the land. When I arrived and was driven into Najaf, I could see small white and grey structures dotted across the lands alongside some of the roads. I asked what they were. "Greenhouses," was the reply from Mustafa. "You see, we can't plant anything in the ground any longer. It's contaminated by uranium and dioxins, so we buy most of our fruits and vegetables from Iran or Turkey. The beautiful displays of fruits and vegetables you'll see in the market all come from somewhere else. We have started raising our own tomatoes and cucumbers in the greenhouses." It was all said so matter-of-factly.

I found I was the only one constantly outraged over the five weeks I was there.

The US has poisoned Iraq's water, ground and air to such a degree, no one knows what the lasting impact will be.

And yet... and yet... during the Al Arbaeen march to Kerbala, the Iraqi people fed more than 15 million pilgrims, took care of them, gave them shelter and provided medical care for them, all at no cost. I was stunned at the generosity and kindness as I watched the march unfold.⁵

And yet... the young women and men English teachers at Sami's school would listen to my stories and wistfully wonder if they would ever be able to travel to 'the West,' since the US (even though it has lifted the ban against Muslims from Iraq) told Katie Sunshine Struble and me that "Under no circumstances will we ever give any of these people visas to visit the US," (some of them had already visited and were all professionals). "You have no idea who we keep out of the US for your protection."

When I demurred and said I doubted we were in any danger from the Iraqis who had already been vetted, the horrid man from the Embassy actually said, "We turn away almost everyone from Nigeria for your benefit. You have no idea who tries to stay in the US." Then, looking at the two of us who were fair-skinned and blonde, he actually said, "And we refused three people from Sweden as well."

I will never forget that visit, the walls and sniper towers (that looked as though they had been built by Israel) of the American Embassy in Iraq, the sneering contempt we faced when we tried to talk about visas (OK, we DID say we were coming to talk about shipping books, then changed the subject) and the entire atmosphere. I ended up with flashback PTSD from the times I was faced with the same suffocating behavior in occupied Palestine.

And yet... I never once felt anything but respect and kindness from every Iraqi I encountered. They know the difference between the American military who invaded and

destroyed their country and the American people, something we Americans certainly don't know.

Ana aasiffa, my dear Iraqi friends...ana aasiffa. (I am sorry)

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Notes

¹ <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/democrac/57.htm>

² <https://www.marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/history-marshall-plan/>

³

<https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/muqtada-al-sadr-iraq-militia-leader-turned-champion-poor-180517053738881.html>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/22/iraq-nuclear-contaminated-sites>

⁵

https://www.opednews.com/articles/Marching-Toward-Kerbala-Th-by-Greta-Berlin-Family_Islam_Purpose-181020-228.html

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