

US to Iraq: 'Vote All You Want, We're Not Leaving!'

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President Trump's decision earlier this month to assassinate Iran's top military general on Iraqi soil - over the objection of the Iraqi government - has damaged the US relationship with its "ally" Iraq and set the region on the brink of war. Iran's measured response - a few missiles fired on an Iraqi base after advance warning was given - is the only reason the US is not mired in another Middle East war.

Trump said his decision to assassinate Gen. Qassim Soleimani was intended to prevent a war, not start a war. But no one in his right mind would think that killing another country's top military leader would not leave that country annoyed, to say the least. Senators Mike Lee (R-UT) and Rand Paul (R-KY) said the Trump Administration's briefing to Congress on its evidence to back up claims that Soleimani was about to launch attacks against the US was among the worst briefings they'd ever attended.

After initially claiming that Soleimani had to be taken out immediately because of "imminent" attacks he was launching against the US, Trump Administration officials including Secretary of State Pompeo and Defense Secretary Esper have been busy walking back those claims. Esper claimed over the weekend that he had not seen the intelligence suggesting an attack on US embassies was in the works. If the Secretary of Defense did not see the intelligence, then who did?

No doubt the Iraqi leadership recognized these kinds of deceptions: the same kinds of lies were used to push the US into attacking their own country in 2003. So it should not have come as a big surprise that the Iraqi government met last week and voted that all foreign military personnel should leave Iraqi soil.

Then a funny thing happened when the Iraqi prime minister attempted to communicate to the US government the will of the Iraqi people through their democratically-elected officials. On Thursday Iraqi Prime Minister Mahdi phoned Pompeo to urgently request that Washington enact a US troop "withdrawal mechanism" in Iraq. American troops are in Iraq by invitation of the Iraqi government and the Iraqi government had just voted to revoke that invitation.

The State Department responded with a statement titled "The US Continued Partnership with Iraq," in which it essentially said that the US would not abide by the request of its Iraqi partners because the US military is a "force for good" in the Middle East and that as such it is "our right" to maintain "appropriate force posture" in the region.

The US invaded Iraq based on Bush Administration lies and a million Iraqis died as a result.

Later, President Obama ramped up the drone program and also backed al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists to overthrow the secular Syrian government. Obama also attacked Libya based on lies, leaving the country totally destroyed. Trump is assassinating foreign officials and threatening destruction of Iran.

And the State Department calls that a “force for good”?

The United States can be a true force for good, however. End the military occupation of the Middle East, end foreign military aid, stop using the CIA to overthrow governments. Allow Americans to travel and do business in any country they wish. Lead by example and demonstrate how free markets and peace benefit all. A “force for good” means not forcing others to bow to your will.

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Michel Chossudovsky

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