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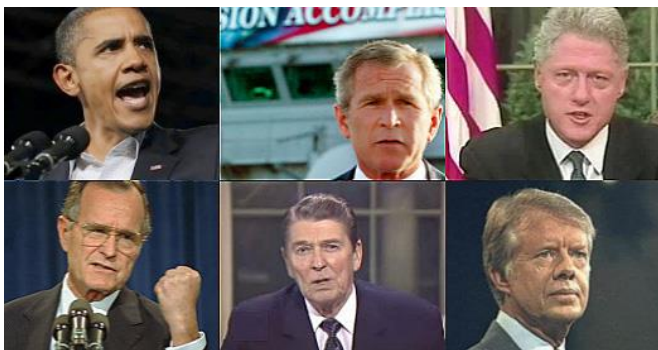
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Six US Presidents Have Destroyed Iraq

By Chris Ernesto

July 3, 2014

It doesn't take a PhD in Sociology to conclude that Iraq was better off with Saddam Hussein than it is today.

It's not that Saddam was a great leader without blood on his hands. It's just that what six US presidents have done to Iraq over the past 35 years has been much worse than anything Saddam ever did to the people of Iraq.

Under Saddam, Iraqis had a thriving economy that included a wealthy middle class, a high functioning infrastructure on par with the most developed nations of the world, and free healthcare and free education through graduate school. Today, Iraqis have an effective

unemployment rate of 50%, a difficult time getting water and electricity, and bombed out hospitals and schools.

In Saddam's Iraq, women's rights were guaranteed in the constitution, religion played virtually no role in government, Sunni and Shia got along relatively well, and al-Qaeda didn't exist. Today, Iraqis are facing Sharia law, Sunni and Shia are killing each other, and al-Qaeda in Iraq (now known as ISIS) has become arguably the most powerful non-government force in the world.

Good job, America

The reason Iraq is in the mess it is today is not because of some long-standing feud between Sunni and Shiite Muslims, it's because six US presidents, spanning ten terms, have created a situation that made today's Iraq inevitable.

The people of Iraq should be applauded for going this long without imploding. They obviously are more peaceful and have more fortitude than Americans. The United States would be in a state of anarchy if bombs were dropped on its major cities, crushing sanctions were levied that killed hundreds of thousands of its children, they were occupied by a foreign military, a puppet government was installed by another country, and arms were given to Republicans to shoot Democrats, and vice-versa.

But Americans can't imagine that type of scenario, and they choose not to think about what their tax dollars, their elected officials, and their willful ignorance has done to another civilization.

And to add insult to injury, Americans, particularly Democrats, are essentially quiet now that their president is about to do the same thing to Iraq that five other presidents have already done.

So working chronologically backwards, here's how six US presidents have destroyed Iraq.

Barack Obama

The US is at war in Iraq. Nobody wants to acknowledge it, possibly because this is not a war *with* Iraq, it's a war *inside* Iraq.

Maybe people actually believed Obama two weeks ago when he said, "American combat troops are not going to be fighting in Iraq." But on Tuesday it was announced that armed drones and Apache helicopters are being flown by US military inside Iraq.

Since when do "advisers" fly Apache helicopters and armed drones?

Also on Tuesday, The Hill reported that Obama is sending 200 more US troops to Iraq, bringing the total number of US ground forces in Iraq to 750. And on Wednesday, the State Department stated that the Obama administration wants to sell 4,000 more US Hellfire missiles to the Iraqi government.

At what point will "progressive" news outlets like Democracy Now and CommonDreams talk about "mission creep" and Obama doublespeak? It may be a while given they are currently talking about immigration, the NSA and the Hobby Lobby. Important issues, yes, but when your country is starting another war in a place it has already terrorized for 35 years, those issues need to be moved down the priority list.

If a Republican were in the Oval Office it's a guarantee that the supposed left-leaning media and national antiwar groups would be going berserk, and might actually play a role in stopping the US from going back into Iraq.

But they won't because their funding largely comes from Democrats, so they can't go after Obama with the same vigor in which they did with Bush.

Even Kirsten Powers, who writes for the USA Today questioned the integrity of fellow liberals in Wednesday's paper when she wrote, "Liberals who obsessed over President Bush's abuses of executive power are suspiciously silent now, or worse, defend the same behavior they found abhorrent in a Republican."

George W. Bush

Not much needs to be said about what the younger Bush did to Iraq. Based on the lie (not bad intelligence, it was a lie) that Saddam had WMD and was a threat to the US, and on the ruse of tying Iraq to the Sept. 11 attacks, Bush whipped Americans into a frenzy and got them to go along with the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Bush's war left at least one-half million Iraqis dead, forced nearly 4 million to become refugees, destroyed Iraq's infrastructure, and created an untold number of enemies of the US, including ISIS.

Bill Clinton

It was the Clinton administration that first perpetuated the myth that Saddam had WMD. "Saddam Hussein must not be allowed to threaten his neighbors or the world with nuclear arms, poison gas or biological weapons," Clinton stated in 1998 in justifying missile strikes on Iraq.

And even after the Clinton presidency had expired, former Clinton VP Al Gore supported George W. Bush on the issue of Iraq WMD, saying, "We know that he has stored secret supplies of biological and chemical weapons throughout his country."

But the most extreme form of terrorism carried out by Clinton was with the use of sanctions on the civilians of Iraq that killed 500,000 children. "Medieval," and "unconscionable" were words used to describe the slow, painful deaths Iraqi children suffered due to the absence of food, basic medicines and anesthesia, which the US prohibited from being imported into Iraq.

Clinton's Secretary of State, Madeline Albright showed the true face of American compassion when she was asked about the deaths of a half million Iraqi children – more than the number who

died in Hiroshima and Nagasaki – when she told 60 Minutes in 1996, "This is a very hard choice, but the price, we think the price is worth it."

The humanitarian disaster resulting from sanctions against Iraq has been frequently cited as a factor that motivated the September 11 terrorist attacks. Osama bin Laden himself mentioned the Iraq sanctions as a reason for the attack against the United States.

George HW Bush

Most everyone remembers the "Saddam's troops are throwing babies from their incubators" story that swayed public opinion in favor of going into Iraq in 1990.

But not everyone knows that the story was a hoax created by American PR firm Hill & Knowlton. The lie reached a crescendo when a young woman named Nayirah appeared in front of a congressional committee to describe the supposed atrocities. But it turns out that Nayirah was the daughter of Kuwait's ambassador to the United States – a man who desperately wanted the US to enter the Iraq/Kuwait fray. When young Nayirah was later asked to provide evidence, she admitted that her story was not true.

And little was made about how one minute the US gave implicit approval for Saddam's military response to Kuwait and the next minute it declared war on Iraq in the name of defending Kuwait.

This was confirmed in a State Department cable released by WikiLeaks in 2011, which detailed the now famous discussion between US ambassador April Glaspie and Saddam himself.

The result of Bush's war on Iraq: At least 100,000 Iraqis killed, and the start of the inhumane, collective punishment sanctions mentioned above.

Ronald Reagan

CIA files released in 2013 confirm what was already believed to be true: The US helped Saddam as he used chemical weapons on Iran.

Adding to the bloodshed, the US also armed Iran, as evidenced by the Iran-Contra Affair. Ultimately, with the US arming both sides, the Iraq-Iran war lasted eight years and killed over one million Iraqis and Iranians.

Jimmy Carter

Because of his reputation of being a man of peace, few want to recall that the Carter Doctrine laid the foundation for US military interventions in the Middle East.

In response to the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Carter declared in his State of the Union address in January 1980 that the United States would use military force if necessary to defend its national interests in the Persian Gulf.

Following this, and fearing that Iran's Revolution might spread to neighboring countries, the Carter administration "gave the Iraqis a green light to launch the war against Iran," according to documents written by Alexander Haig.

It's the people of the US, too

Iraq is a near failed state today in large part because of imperial America's quest for absolute world domination. The US does not care how many people must suffer and die – it always finds a way to claim, "it was worth it, because without us, things would be much worse."

People around the world are generous, if not naïve, in believing that America's global aggression is the fault of the government and not the people. Americans are like the guy who watches a neighborhood bully beat up a kid every day but doesn't say anything because the bully's father is his boss at work.

Of the six US presidents who have shattered Iraq, half have been Democrats and half have been Republicans. Obviously, it's not just one party that votes for war presidents. And voters from both parties are conspicuously silent when *their* president tells lies in order to justify waging war.

At the end of 35 years, how is it that Americans care less about Iraq than they did 10 years ago?