

How did the U.S. government lead its people to war?

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

The Costs of War



After four years, the American invasion and occupation of Iraq has brought with it more than 100,000 civilian and military deaths

100,000 deaths is a conservative estimate. [U.S. military deaths confirmed by the U.S. Department of Defense totaled 4,318 \(as of June 2009\)](#). This number does not include the military deaths of allied nations, nor the deaths of civilian contractors, journalists, and aid workers.

The number of Iraqis who have died from the Iraq War is unknown and difficult to measure due to the instability in the country. Estimates of civilian and military deaths (beyond the natural death rate) have ranged widely from 80,000 to 1.2 million.

The most comprehensive study to date was completed in January 2008 by the World Health Organization (W.H.O.), the public health division of the United Nations, which estimated that [151,000 Iraqi civilians had died as a result of the war \(covering only the 3-year period from March 2003 to June 2006\)](#). This study acknowledged a margin of error, citing a 95 percent degree of certainty that between 104,000 and 223,000 civilians had been killed. The study was carried out in conjunction with the Iraqi government.

In October 2006, the British medical journal, The Lancet, published an article that estimated that [601,027 Iraqis had died directly of violent causes \(such as gunfire, car bombs and air strikes\) from March 2003 to July 2006](#). That number rose to 654,965 when those who suffered from a general decline in healthcare and sanitary standards due to failing water supplies, sewerage and lack of electricity were included. This survey was produced by Iraqi physicians and was overseen by epidemiologists at Johns Hopkins University's School of Public Health. Researchers calculated a margin of error that ranged from 426,369 to 793,663 deaths.

[\[link to source 1\]](#) [\[link to source 2\]](#) [\[link to source 3\]](#) [\[link to source 4\]](#)

In September 2007, Opinion Research Business (ORB), the U.K.'s top research and polling agency, estimated that [1.2 million Iraqis had died from the war](#). Accounting for a margin of error, ORB calculated a minimum of 733,158 deaths and a maximum of 1,446,063.

Millions of Iraqis have been displaced from their homes. Nearly 2,000,000 have fled the country

March 2, 2007

Time Magazine reports [\[link to source\]](#)



"The war in Iraq has driven nearly 4 million people from their homes. As many as 2 million have fled the country, in what Refugees International calls the fastest-growing crisis in the world. As detailed in the stories that follow, the burden of coping with this exodus has fallen most heavily on Iraq's neighbors, such as Syria, Jordan and Iran, who have absorbed the vast majority of exiles."

A Mechanism for War

Rhetoric and Spin

War Through Rose-Colored Glasses

Abuses and Misuses of Intelligence

A Mythic Reality

Items of Note

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

No weapons of mass destruction found

No mobile biological weapons labs

Iraq did not seek to acquire yellowcake uranium

Aluminum tubes not for nuclear weapons

Mohamed Atta did not meet with Iraqis

Iraq did not provide training to al-Qaeda

No collaboration between Iraq and al-Qaeda

Iraq was not involved in the attacks of 9/11

● The Costs of War

More than 100,000 deaths

Millions displaced from their homes

Untold numbers of wounded

War expenditures over 500 billion to date



July 29, 2007

CBC News (Canada) reports [\[link to source\]](#)

"At least four million Iraqis have been forced to flee either to another part of Iraq or abroad since the war began in 2003, according to a new report by Oxfam and the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq.

"More than two million people, mostly women and children, have been displaced in Iraq, and another two million are now refugees in Syria and Jordan, according to the groups' report, Rising to the Humanitarian Challenge in Iraq."

Untold numbers of people have been mentally and physically wounded

It's impossible to measure the number of individuals mentally and physically wounded by the Iraq war.

The U.S. Department of Defense calculates that there have been [31,368 soldiers physically wounded in Iraq](#) (total wounded in action (WIA) as of June 2009) including many who have lost limbs and have suffered brain injuries from IEDs (improvised explosive devices). Many veterans returning from the war are struggling to find adequate care in the military health care system. For example, more than nine out of ten disabled veterans had been kept [waiting for benefit evaluations](#) beyond the 40-day limit set by the Pentagon, with some waiting up to a year and a half.

The mental trauma from combat is more difficult to measure, and varies from mild to severe. An official report released in June 2007 by the [U.S. Department of Defense Task Force on Mental Health](#) stated that 12 to 24% of veterans returning from Iraq – varying by branch of service – suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The report also found that the current system for evaluation and treatment of veterans for mental health problems was woefully overburdened, understaffed, and underresourced.

Another study of returning veterans who have been treated at VA hospitals determined that [33% suffer from mental illness \(such as PTSD and depression\) or a psycho-social disorder \(such as substance abuse, homelessness, and marital problems, including domestic violence\)](#).

Rates of suicide have risen dramatically. [In 2006 alone, 948 active duty Army soldiers attempted to take their own lives – 99 of these soldiers tragically committed suicide, which is a rate of 17.3 per 100,000, the highest rate in the Army in 26 years.](#)

For the Iraqi people, the suffering caused by the war and its aftermath has been immense



They have been subjected to air strikes, gun violence, suicide bombings and IED explosions, with 22% of all households having had a household member die from violence caused by the Iraq war ([according to ORB polls](#)). It is a country ripped apart by sectarian and ethnic violence, that has suffered from a scarcity of food, potable water, electricity, sanitation, schools and adequate medical care. Many families have been separated by the violence and the threat of violence, with people dispersed across the country and forced to flee into neighboring countries such as Syria as refugees. The mental and physical trauma is incalculable.

Due to a lack of infrastructure and depleted resources in Iraq, hospitals are overwhelmed and cannot adequately tend to their wounded and dying. This problem is acute, as suicide bombings and IED explosions often wound more than they kill. Also, the lack of sanitation has caused public health crises, as evidenced in the widespread and rising [outbreaks of cholera](#).

[Iraqi children are now showing behavioral problems and signs of depression](#) at rates three times higher than before the war. [Doctors have been targeted by kidnappers and murderers](#), making it dangerous for them to even treat patients.

Time Magazine, "Casualty of War: Mental Health" (March 12, 2007) [\[link to source\]](#)

"While many news reports have focused on the high rates of devastating physical injuries among soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, a new study, released today, measures another form of casualty: mental illness.

"The study, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, was conducted by Dr. Karen Seal and colleagues at the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Medical Center and the University of California, San Francisco. According to their analysis, about one third of the 103,788 returning veterans seen at V.A. facilities between Sept. 30, 2001 and Sept. 30, 2005 were diagnosed with mental illness or a psycho-social disorder — such as homelessness and marital problems, including domestic violence.

"Over half — 56% — were suffering from more than one disorder. The median was three disorders, says Dr. Seal: 'So instead of treating just post-traumatic stress disorder [PTSD], you're treating PTSD, depression and substance abuse.' The most common combination, she says, was PTSD and depression. 'That's understandable,' says Seal, because soldiers face horrifying events in combat that lead to PTSD while experiencing 'a lot of loss and separation that leads to depression.'"

CNN, "Iraqi women: Prostituting ourselves to feed our children" (August 16, 2007) [\[link to source\]](#)

"BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- The women are too afraid and ashamed to show their faces or have their real names used. They have been driven to sell their bodies to put food on the table for their children -- for as little as \$8 a day...



"At the start I was cleaning homes, but I wasn't making much. No matter how hard I worked it just wasn't enough,' she says. Karima, clad in all black, adds, 'My husband died of lung cancer nine months ago and left me with nothing.'

"She has five children, ages 8 to 17. Her eldest son could work, but she's too afraid for his life to let him go into the streets, preferring to sacrifice herself than risk her child.

"She was solicited the first time when she was cleaning an office.

"They took advantage of me,' she says softly. 'At first I rejected it, but then I realized I have to do it.' ...

"Prostitution is a choice more and more Iraqi women are making just to survive...

"Violence, increased cost of living, and lack of any sort of government aid leave women like these with few other options, according to humanitarian workers.

"At this point there is a population of women who have to sell their bodies in order to keep their children alive,' says Yanar Mohammed, head and founder of the Organization for Women's Freedom in Iraq. 'It's a taboo that no one is speaking about.'

"She adds, 'There is a huge population of women who were the victims of war who had to sell their bodies, their souls and they lost it all. It crushes us to see them, but we have to work on it and that's why we started our team of women activists'...

"Most of the women that we find at hospitals [who] have tried to commit suicide' have been involved in prostitution, said Basma Rahim, a member of Mohammed's team...

"According to Rahim and Mohammed, most of the women they encounter say they are driven to prostitution by a desperate desire for survival in the dangerously violent and unforgiving circumstances in Iraq."

War expenditures have exceeded \$500 billion

The direct monetary costs of the war have exceeded \$500 billion. The *McClatchy Newspapers* reported on April 30, 2007 that the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service estimated that [the total cost for the war would soon total \\$564 billion](#).

However, factoring in the long-term economic ramifications of borrowing the entire cost of the war, caring for wounded veterans and other future expenditures, the [total direct and indirect costs to U.S. taxpayers will surpass \\$1 trillion](#), according to analyses by economists.

As reported by MSNBC on March 17, 2006 [\[link to source\]](#)



"Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning economist..., puts the final figure at a staggering \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion, including \$500 billion for the war and occupation and up to \$300 billion in future health care costs for wounded troops. Additional costs include a negative impact from the rising cost of oil and added interest on the national debt."

As reported by *The Boston Globe* on August 1, 2007 [\[link to source\]](#)

"The war in Iraq could ultimately cost well over a trillion dollars -- at least double what has already been spent -- including the long-term costs of replacing damaged equipment, caring for wounded troops, and aiding the Iraqi government, according to a new government analysis...

"Testifying before the House Budget Committee yesterday, [the Budget Office's assistant director for budget analysis, Robert A.] Sunshine told lawmakers that he used two scenarios -- an optimistic one in which most U.S. troops are withdrawn, and another in which a sizable contingent remains for several years -- to calculate anticipated costs.

"If the United States gradually reduced its troop level in Iraq to 30,000 by 2010, the U.S. Treasury would still have to provide up to \$500 billion more to sustain those troops, as well as pay other expenses, he said in the report.

"In the alternative scenario -- in which 75,000 U.S. troops remain stationed in Iraq over the next five years -- the nation would have to pay an additional \$900 billion, according to the analysis...

"Lawmakers expressed concern that the White House is not adequately preparing the country for the financial burden.

“It is being paid for on the national credit card,’ [Representative James P.] McGovern said. ‘It is being put on their backs of our kids and grandkids. That is indefensible.’

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