

### U.S. invasion responsible deaths of over 250,000 civilians in Iraq

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by John Stokes

New studies make the Bush administration's "liberation" argument for a 'pre-emptive' war against Iraq seem questionable.

The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 by U.S.-led coalition forces has been responsible for the death of at least 150,000 civilians (not including certain of Iraq), reveals a compilation of scientific studies and corroborated eyewitness testimonies.

The majority of these deaths, which are in addition those normally expected from natural causes, illness and accidents, have been among women and children, documents a well-researched study, that had been released by The Lancet Medical Journal.

The report in the British journal is based on the work of teams from the Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University in the U.S., and the Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad.

A similar methodology was used in the late 1990's to calculate the number of deaths from the war in Kosovo, put at 10,000.

The information was obtained as Iraqi interviewers surveyed 808 families, consisting of 7,868 people, in 33 different "clusters" or neighbourhoods spread across the country.

In each case, they asked how many births and deaths there had been in the home since January 2002.

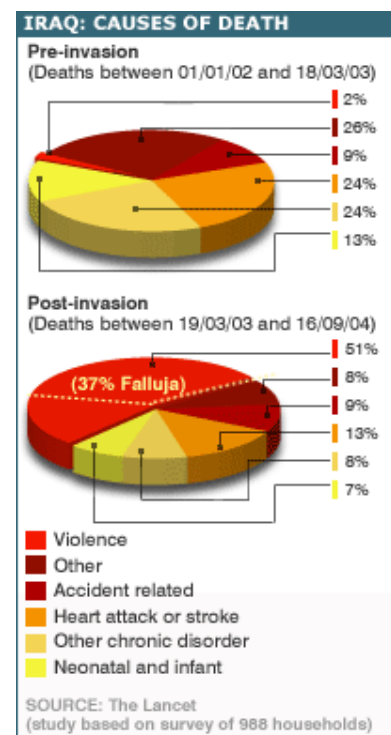


That information was then compared with the death rates in each neighbourhood in the 15 months before the invasion that toppled president Saddam Hussein, adjusted for the different time frames, and extrapolated to cover the entire 24.4 million population of Iraq.

The most common cause of death is as a direct result of a worsening 'culture of violence', mostly caused by indiscriminate U.S. co-ordinated air strikes, and related military interventions, reveals the study of almost 1000 households scattered across Iraq. And the risk of violent death just after the invasion was 58 times greater than before the war. The overall risk of death was 1.5 times more after the invasion than before.

The on-going American Occupation has also created worsened civil strife as well as mass environmental destructions and related public health problems that is associated with American bomb-related released radioactive and other life-threatening pollutions. The American Occupation has also prevailed over the neglect to the repairing of vital public services-related infrastructure, which include U.S.-led destructions of water systems.

The figure of 100,000 had been based on somewhat "conservative assumptions", notes Les Roberts at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, U.S., who led the study.



That estimate excludes Falluja, a hotspot for violence. If the data from this town is included, the compiled studies point to about 250,000 excess deaths since the outbreak of the U.S.-led war.

Many Americans have complained that more than \$200 billion U.S. tax dollars have been diverted from vitally needed public services in the United States, into apparently reckless activities. These activities are resulting in inflicted

mass-casualties against totally innocent civilians, which have worsened conditions for political extremism, and ensuing "terrorism".

It is well documented that such activities are being viewed by many Iraqis, and other peoples internationally, to undermine a popular feeling of international security in general. Indeed, polls suggest that Americans felt much more secure under the former political leadership of U.S. President Bill Clinton, as compared to the militaristic strategies which are being pursued by the George W. Bush administration.

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