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# **The Crime of the Century**

by Paul Craig Roberts

**P**resident George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq is the greatest crime of the 21st century.

Armed with a powerful moral case against Bush, whose lies are responsible for a war that has caused thousands of U.S. casualties and killed vast numbers of Iraqi civilians, Democratic leaders are damning Bush's war because it did not succeed!

The Bush regime lied and fabricated "evidence" that was used to deceive Congress, the American people, and the United Nations. The vice president of the United States and the national security adviser created public images of mushroom clouds going up over American cities unless Iraq was invaded and Saddam Hussein's terrible weapons of mass destruction were destroyed.

At the time that these absurd claims were being made, experts knew that they were false. Today everyone knows that the claims were lies.

The invasion of Iraq under false pretenses comprises solid grounds for impeaching both Bush and Cheney and for turning them over to the War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague. Under the Nuremberg standard, to commit unprovoked aggression is a war crime.

Among the consequences of Bush's monstrous war crime are the deaths of tens or hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians, the destruction of Iraqi civilian infrastructure, the outbreak of civil war between Iraqi Sunnis and Shi'ites, the spreading of this sectarian conflict throughout the Middle East, and the consequent destabilization of the region.

Try to imagine all the lives, careers, hopes, and families that Bush has destroyed. Try to imagine the fate of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees, the departure of educated and skilled Iraqis from Iraq, the ultimate horror of civil war that is only beginning.

Official U.S. casualties (dead, wounded, and maimed) at time of writing total 26,194. Experts have estimated the cost of the invasion and attempted occupation to be in excess of the enormous sum of 1,000 billion dollars.

This expenditure has made profits for Vice President Cheney, for Cheney's firm, Halliburton, for the U.S. military-industrial complex, and for private contractors, but it has done nothing whatsoever for Americans. Sen. Frank Lautenberg reports that "Halliburton has already raked in more than \$10 billion" from the Iraq war and that the value of Cheney's Halliburton stock options has jumped from \$241,498 to more than \$8,000,000.

Moreover, the cost of Bush's aggression in Iraq has been covered by red ink and foreign borrowing, which is financially punishing every American by pushing down the value of the dollar and pushing up the tax burden to service the war debt.

The conclusion is unavoidable that Bush has committed a massive crime against Iraqis, against the

Middle East, against American citizens and military families, and against America's reputation.

Finally coming to their senses and realizing the pointlessness of Bush's war, the American people gave the Democratic Party control over the House and Senate in the hopes that the Democrats would put a stop to Bush's war.

Was the electorate's faith in the Democrats justified?

Listen to the Democrats' statements and judge for yourself.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joseph Biden declared on ABC's *This Week* that "it's the failed policy of this president, going to war without a strategy, going to war prematurely, going to war without enough troops, going to war without enough equipment."

Sen. Hillary Clinton, a likely Democratic candidate for president, says, "This was his decision to go to war with an ill-conceived plan and an incompetently executed strategy."

The Democrats are damning Bush not for his monstrous crime but for failing at it!

Instead of holding Bush accountable for his crimes with impeachment proceedings, Hillary Clinton merely wants Bush to get rid of the problem so she will not be troubled with it on her watch: "We expect him to extricate our country from this before he leaves office." Hillary says it would be "the height of irresponsibility" for Bush to pass the war along to the next president.

A moral, humane, decent, honest person would define "the height of irresponsibility" as the act of taking two countries to war on the basis of lies and deception.

Now that Bush and Cheney have lost their war due to their incompetence and faulty execution, the Democrats are going to pass a nonbinding resolution against escalating the war in Iraq. While Congress negotiates a posture on the Iraq war, the Bush regime moves forward with its plans to attack Iran.

Everyone can see the U.S. buildup of massive air and naval attack forces on Iran's borders. Fox "News," the Bush regime's main disinformation agency, is busy preparing its viewers for the U.S. attack by whipping up fear and hysteria over Iran. The Bush regime suddenly changed its line and now blames Iran instead of al-Qaeda for its defeat in Iraq. The Israel Lobby is working around the clock for a U.S. strike on Iran. On Jan. 30 Bush again threatened that he will respond firmly if Tehran escalates its involvement in Iraq.

Bush's threats are part of the propaganda that is creating an excuse that Bush can use to attack Iran.


Bush plans to bomb Iran. U.S. war doctrine has been altered to allow Bush to use nuclear weapons to attack Iran. American neoconservatives and Israel's right wing have argued in behalf of attacking Iran with nuclear weapons, and a number of foreign experts are forecasting such an attack.

While Bush prepares in public view his war on Iran, the Democrats turn a blind eye. For the Democrats the only issue is whether or not Bush should send 21,500 more U.S. troops to Iraq.

The issue is whether the war in Iraq can be quickly ended, or Bush and Cheney impeached, before the two war criminals create a more monstrous crime and a more dangerous situation for America and the world by attacking Iran.

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