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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By John Catalinotto

23.03.2023

## ***Putin? Arrest George W. Bush!***

March 19, 2023 — Two events reported on extensively this weekend belonged in the same article, yet they were separated. Combining them exposes the criminal hypocrisy of U.S. imperialism and its corporate media.



**Article's author John Catalinotto speaks at a demonstration protesting U.S. occupation of Iraq at the Bourse in Brussels, Belgium, during President George W. Bush's February 2005 visit to Europe.**

First, the media headlined that the International Criminal Court (ICC), located in The Hague, Netherlands, issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin March 17, alleging war crimes in Ukraine.

Second, the same media commemorated the 20-year anniversary of the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Iraq with a rewriting of its history.

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The establishment “news sources” failed to mention that the ICC never indicted a single U.S. political leader for the war crimes the Pentagon committed in Iraq. It’s useful to review these crimes.

### **An overload of U.S. war crimes**

That the media focused on both these news items begs the question: Why haven’t the U.S. leaders of the invasion and occupation — George W. Bush and his cabinet, the Pentagon’s generals and admirals — been indicted for the numerous war crimes U.S. forces committed in Iraq?

The Costs of War Project is an arm of the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University. It doesn’t exaggerate its results, and it cites credible sources.

Costs of War reports: “March 19-20, 2023, marks 20 years since United States forces invaded Iraq . . . under the false claim that [the Iraqi government] was manufacturing weapons of mass destruction. ([tinyurl.com/bdezt2fe](https://tinyurl.com/bdezt2fe))

“The ensuing war, in which U.S. ground presence peaked in 2007 with over 170,000 soldiers, caused massive death, destruction and political instability in Iraq. Among the consequences was the increase of sectarian politics, widespread violence and the rise of the Islamic State militant group with its terror attacks throughout the Middle East. . . . An estimated 300,000 people have died from direct war violence in Iraq . . .”

Others estimate that 1 million more Iraqis died as an indirect result of the occupation and Washington’s conscious division of Iraqi society. Some 8 million Iraqis have been displaced, they say, and the fighting left 4 million Iraqi children orphans. (New York University Prof. Sinan Antoon, an Iraqi exile, on Democracy Now!, March 20)

Added to this are the million-plus Iraqis killed by the sanctions the U.S. imposed on that country from August 1990 to March 2003. These deaths included a half million Iraqi children, which then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright deemed justified. ([tinyurl.com/2226uk5u](https://tinyurl.com/2226uk5u))

The ICC didn’t indict Albright or her boss, President Bill Clinton, nor did it touch any in the Bush administration responsible for the Iraq occupation. According to a March 15 Intercept article, those latter criminals grew wealthier and had professional acclaim. ([tinyurl.com/5fetnc8z](https://tinyurl.com/5fetnc8z))

### **An abundance of hypocrisy**

The NATO countries used the predecessor to the ICC, which was an ad-hoc court, to put additional pressure on the leaders of Yugoslavia during the 79 days in 1999, when the

armies of the U.S., Germany, France, Italy and other NATO powers bombed and rocketed civilian targets all over Serbia and Montenegro.

Those few convicted have been African leaders and some from Cambodia. The court has never charged leaders of the major imperialist countries or even questioned the war crimes of Saudi Arabia in Yemen or of the Israeli leaders occupying Palestine.

No charges were brought against the Bush, Obama, Trump and Biden administrations for the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan nor for the Obama administration's unprovoked attack on Libya nor its interventions — with horrific results — in Honduras and in Syria. Some reports noted that the U.S., while it signed the ICC treaty, refuses to be subject to it, and it's easy to see why.

Whatever war crimes have been committed by governments worldwide, the only political or military leaders the ICC has tried and punished have been leaders of relatively small and poor countries.

Already discredited by its history, the ICC is now being used by the U.S.-NATO side in the proxy war against Russia. This attempt to demonize the Russian leadership can create a new pretext for expanding the war.

If the ICC were serious about putting war criminals on trial, it would start by issuing arrest warrants for the two Bushes, Clinton, Obama and all those in the leadership of the Republican and Democratic parties who collaborated in the illegal invasions, occupations and interventions.

*John Catalinotto took part in the 2000 War Crimes Tribunal regarding the U.S./NATO war on Yugoslavia and the 2004 War Crimes Tribunal on U.S. crimes against Iraq. (See [iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org) for background on the popular tribunals.)*

Workers World 22.03.2023