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America's legacy in Iraq: Violence, death, and another monster to destroy

By Jayel Aheram
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Despite President Barack Obama's announcement of the Third End of War in Iraq, the people of Iraq continue to suffer under unrelenting violence all the while the toll from civilian deaths continues to climb. While America was celebrating Independence Day on July 4 with colorful explosion of fireworks, Iraqis were treated to non-celebratory explosions of car bombs and death squads. 19 people were killed and 52 wounded. And that was just one day.

Over 100 people have died and more than 200 wounded in Iraq last week in a spate of violence that continues unabated. Below is a rundown of the gruesome numbers from this past week:

- **July 2:** Three dead in Iraq unrest, at least 4 wounded, including a judge killed in Nineveh and an Iraqi soldier killed in Ramadi.
- **July 3:** 63 killed, 151 wounded.
- **July 4:** 19 killed, 52 wounded.
- **July 5:** 10 killed, 48 wounded.

- **July 6:** 22 killed, 58 wounded.
- **July 7:** 2 killed, 11 wounded.

The Iraq War is not over for the people of Iraq. This "end of war" did not necessarily mean the end of violence, deaths, fighting there. After two decades of sanctions, bombings, followed by 9 years of continuous warfare, the recovery and rebuilding of Iraqi civil society will take more than a simple celebratory announcement from an American president. Iraq's infrastructure is in shambles and the growing sectarian violence is casting doubts on a strong economy, and Iraq needs both to recover. However, it is increasingly evident that recovery is not forthcoming and that Iraqis should look forward to long-term misery.

While the cynic in me believes that a civil war in Iraq would be keeping with U.S. foreign policy doctrine -- that is, a perpetual conflict or an Arab Winter -- a few people believe that Iraq is instead headed towards a dictatorship. Even former Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi decried what he calls Maliki's "monopolization of power":

Our position is to stand up against despotism and the monopolization of power, which will turn Iraq into a dictatorship. We must resist this march toward dictatorship by employing the Iraqi Constitution and by using peaceful, political means.

Recently appearing on RT's Crosstalk, Antiwar.com's John Glaser said that Iraq is "sinking towards dictatorship" under the direction of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Glaser claims that Maliki has ordered the suppression of news media, detained hundreds of political opponents and even tortured them, and consolidated power by purging Sunnis and Kurds from government. Glaser goes even further declaring that the government of Iraq under the U.S.-backed Maliki is "one of the most corrupt in the world." And one that is funded by the United States to the tune of \$2 billion in annual aid and tens of billions of military assistance.

So why would America continue to play a part in this charade of peace? It could be the fact that Iraq sits on top of 8.3 % of the world's proven oil reserves. Or the billions of dollars in weapon sales? Or maybe the killing to be made in the perpetual reconstruction that follows the perpetual destruction--the Broken Window of the Keynesians' dreams writ large on an endless macabre loop. In reality and despite President Obama's words to the contrary, the goal was never democracy or peace in the Middle East, but control and hegemony.

Maliki's ascent as Iraq's new dictator is very much in keeping with American foreign policy of the past half century; America builds dictators in order to destroy them. Why would the United States do anything different?