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A Month of Mournful Anniversaries

By John Glaser

March 17, 2013



This month is chock-full of mournful anniversaries.

Most prominent today is the initiation of the Bush administration's bombing campaign and invasion of Iraq in 2003, observed today by Antiwar.com's very own Justin Raimondo. The anniversary has also been commemorated in writing by Seymour Hersh and Richard Falk, both featured in our Viewpoints section today, and earlier in the month by Eric Margolis, Stephen Zunes, Andrew Bacevich and many more. John Tirman is worth a read as is this great piece by Robert Taylor.

Saturday, March 16th, marked the 45th anniversary of the My Lai massacre, wherein US soldiers slaughtered more than 500 Vietnamese civilians. It remains one of the most shocking and memorable war crimes of the conflict, but, as Nick Turse writes at the Daily Beast, there were many others like it that most Americans have yet to hear about. Turse's new book is a history of those appalling atrocities.

Saturday also marked the ten year anniversary of the death of Rachel Corrie, who was killed in the Gaza Strip when the Israel Defense Forces ran over her with a bulldozer on its way to demolish a Palestinian home. Rachel's father wrote a piece for *The Hill* to commemorate the anniversary and lament how shamefully little has been done to prevent further Israeli destruction of Palestinian homes on Palestinian land.

Less noticed in the world of political media and Op-Ed topics is the two year anniversary of the NATO bombing of Libya, which passed yesterday. The Obama administration and their European counterparts started that war on the basis of dubious humanitarian rationales, claiming former strongman Gadhafi was poised to slaughter unarmed Libyans wholesale. They then used a rather limited United Nations Security Council Resolution for a no-fly zone, circumventing Congress and in violation of the War Powers Resolution, as a springboard to impose regime change on a dispensable dictator who had been Washington's ally months earlier, but who quickly turned into the embodiment of pure evil once war was decided upon. Really, this was just another example of the US interfering in a civil war for the sake of its own perceiving geopolitical interests. Libya's armed rebels were fast heralded as freedom fighters by war advocates, despite the fact that many of them committed horrendous crimes in the course of the war and significant portions of them had ties to al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militants. In countless articles, columns, and blog posts, Antiwar.com refuted the basic justifications for the war and warned of impending consequences. The war did produce extremely negative consequences beyond the human costs of the war itself, including destabilizing the country and the region, planting the seeds for another civil war to the south in Mali, and perhaps most infamously getting weapons in the hands of al-Qaeda-linked extremists who retaliated against covert US military raids by attacking the US consulate in Benghazi and killing four Americans. Libya today remains very unstable, with rebel groups refusing to disarm or cede control to the "government," which has now begun to aid and abet the very Islamic militant groups that attacked the US consulate.

A sorrowful commemorative month indeed.