



As we approach the 8th anniversary of a U.S. invasion of Iraq, and having just passed the 20th anniversary of another, it's worth reflecting on what's been accomplished through two wars and the intervening sanctions that former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright so famously approved of even at the cost of a half million children's lives. The authors of "Erasing Iraq" interviewed Iraqis as far afield as Sweden and Australia: "Every Iraqi we spoke with reported similar events: houses bombed, possessions lost, children kidnapped, lives destroyed. 'Americans -- when they hear one shot -- even if it's like 10 kilometers away -- they'll just open fire on everything,' said Laith as he lit a cigarette with the small red heating coils warming his cramped two-room house in East Amman, Jordan." The authors did not mention it, but this experience has been reported by American soldiers who took part in it as well, including Ethan McCord:

"We had a pretty gung-ho commander, who decided that because we were getting hit by IEDs a lot, there would be a new battalion SOP [standard operating procedure]. He goes, 'If someone in your line gets hit with an IED, 360 rotational fire. You kill every motherfucker on the street.'"

Another way to kill "every motherfucker on the street" is to destroy water supplies, sewage plants, hospitals, and bridges. This we have done most extensively in 1991 and 2003. On the first occasion, a U.S. Air force planning officer justified these criminal acts as no worse and having no other purpose than economic sanctions:

"People say, 'You didn't recognize that it was going to have an effect on water or sewage.' Well, what were we trying to do with sanctions -- help out the Iraqi people? No. What we were doing with the attacks on infrastructure was to accelerate the effect of the sanctions." A UNICEF survey concluded that these actions killed 47,000 children. Awesome and shocking, but shock and awe hadn't even been invented yet. And by the time it was, Iraq would be a shadow of its former self.

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