

By Chris Floyd

From [Empire Burlesque](#) | Original Article

In March 2003, the United States of America launched an entirely unprovoked act of military aggression against a nation which had not attacked it and posed no threat to it. This act led directly to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. It drove millions more from their homes, and plunged the entire conquered nation into suffering, fear, hatred and deprivation.

This is the reality of what actually happened in Iraq: aggression, slaughter, atrocity, ruin. It is the only reality; there is no other. And it was done deliberately, knowingly, willingly. Indeed, the bipartisan American power structure spent more than \$1 trillion to make it happen. It is a record of unspeakable savagery, an abomination, an outpouring of the most profound and filthy moral evil.

Line up the bodies of the children, the thousands of children -- the infants, the toddlers, the schoolkids -- whose bodies were torn to pieces, burned alive or riddled with bullets during the American invasion and occupation of Iraq. Line them up in the desert sand, walk past them, mile after mile, all those twisted corpses, those scraps of torn flesh and seeping viscera, those blank faces, those staring eyes fixed forever on nothingness.

This is the reality of what happened in Iraq; there is no other reality.

These children -- these thousands of children -- are dead, and will always be dead, as a direct result of the unprovoked act of military aggression launched and sustained by the American power structure. Killing these children, creating and maintaining the conditions that led to the slaughter of these children, was precisely what the armed forces of the United States were doing in Iraq. Without the invasion, without the occupation, without the 1.5 million members of the American volunteer army who surrendered their moral agency to "just follow orders" and carry out their leaders' agenda of aggression, those children would not have died -- would not have been torn, eviscerated, shot, burned and destroyed.

This is the reality of what happened in Iraq; you cannot make it otherwise. It has already happened; it always will have happened. You cannot undo it.

But you can, of course, ignore it. This is the path chosen by the overwhelming majority of Americans, and by the entirety of the bipartisan elite. This involves a pathological degree of disassociation from reality. What is plainly there -- the evil, the depravity, the guilt -- cannot be accepted, and so it is converted into its opposite: goodness, triumph, righteousness. The moral structures of the psyche are eaten away by this malignant dynamic, as are the mind's powers of perception and judgment. Thus depravity and evil come to seem more and more normal; it becomes more and more difficult to focus on what is really in front of you, to perceive, judge and *care* about the actual consequences of what you've done or what is being done in your name. Unmoored from reality, you become lost in a savage nihilism that cloaks its unsifted rage and fear and chaos in the most threadbare pieties. And thus you drift deeper and deeper into evil and meaninglessness, singing hosannas to yourself as you go.

And so Barack Obama, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, the self-proclaimed inheritor of the mantle of Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi, went to North Carolina this week to declare the act of aggression in Iraq "an extraordinary achievement." He lauded the soldiers gathered before him for their "commitment to fulfil your mission": the mission of carrying out an unprovoked war of aggression and imposing a society-destroying occupation that led directly to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent people. These activities -- "everything that American troops have done in Iraq" -- led to "this moment of success," he proclaimed.

He spoke of suffering, he spoke of sacrifice, he spoke of loss and enduring pain -- but only for the Americans involved in the unprovoked war of aggression, and their families. He did not say a single word -- not one -- about the thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of Iraqis killed by this "fulfilled mission," this "extraordinary achievement," this "success." These human beings -- these sons and daughters, fathers, mothers, kinfolk, lovers, friends -- cannot be acknowledged. They cannot be *perceived*. It must be as if they had never existed. It must be as if they are not dead now.

The divorce from reality here is beyond description. It is only the all-pervasiveness of the disassociation that obscures its utter and obvious insanity. There is something intensely primitive and infantile in the reductive, navel-gazing, self-blinding monomania of the American psyche today. Think of the ancient Greeks, who constructed their psyches and their worldview around an epic poem, the Iliad, that depicted their enemies, the Trojans, with remarkable

sympathy, understanding and insight -- while depicting their own leaders as a band of shallow, squabbling, murderous fools. Here was a moral sophistication, a cold-eyed grasp of reality -- and a level of empathy for one's fellow human beings -- far beyond the capacity of modern American society, and infinitely beyond the reach of the murderous fools who seek to lead it.

The Iraq War has not ended. Not for the dead, not for their survivors, not for the displaced, the maimed, the lost, the suffering, not for all of us who live in the degraded, destabilised, impoverished world it has spawned, and not for the future generations who will live with the ever-widening, ever-deepening consequences of this irrevocable evil.