

# REMEMBERING MARCH 19: FIVE OR SEVENTEEN YEARS?

It jolts me to hear "fifth year anniversary" and "beginning of sixth year of the war in Iraq" when we all know that **the US never stopped bombing Iraq since January of 1991**. That's 17 years. Remember the no-fly zones? Remember looking on page 12 in the papers and seeing a one inch article about how "sheep were bombed yesterday in Iraq" or some such "news"?

[We should also remember the economic war the US and UN conducted against Iraq from 1990 to 2003 in the form of economic sanctions which took the lives of over 2,000,000 Iraqis, most of them young children, the old and sick. And we must remember the years that the US supported Saddam Hussein while he oppressed the Iraqi people. One state department official put it this way: he's an S.O.B but he's our S.O.B.]

I'm reminded of Carolyn Forché's book of poetry: *Against Forgetting*. In it she reminds us that Hitler asked his military cabinet before his invasion of Poland in 1939: "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" [The answer, of course, was no one. His point was that no one would remember the invasion of Poland.]

The media cultivates amnesia in us; the government requires such mindlessness in us. And yet we have a responsibility as a peace community to remember the nation that Iraq was before 1991: the water systems, the electrical systems, the educational, medical and agricultural systems that were, in some ways, more advanced than what we have today in the states.

We have a responsibility to remember the carpet bombing [during the first Gulf war] that in 42 days systematically destroyed objects "indispensable to the survival of the civilian population" which is against the Geneva conventions. In those 42 days, Iraq was bombed to a pre-industrial age and then, through sanctions, Iraqis were denied trade, telecommunications, power, sanitation, water repairs, seed, food, medical supplies and equipment.

And how many Iraqi people have been killed [in this current invasion and occupation]? Must be more than 1,000,000: a number too large to comprehend unless you're an Iraqi mother or father or child who has lost a family member. And how many Iraqi people have

suffered? The stories of suffering are heartbreaking: the terror of the bombs, soldiers breaking down doors, poisoning from depleted uranium munitions... These stories could fill all the books in the world.

And so we move forward and support all the nonviolent actions on March 19: we're thankful for the work people have put into planning many good and creative resistance actions but **we must urge remembrance of the many years our country has punished, bombed, poisoned and killed people of Iraq and done all in its power to destroy their country [as our country, even now, is positioning itself to kill people of Iran and destroy their country.]**

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## 8<sup>th</sup> Day Center for Justice



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# TROOPS HOME NOW!



## March 19

### Protest!

6 PM rally, Federal Plaza at Adams & Dearborn, then march from the loop to the "Gold Coast"

★★★★★

## March 20

### Resist!

Participate in a day of creative actions throughout the downtown & metro area, followed by a permitted "Convergence," 5 PM at Federal Plaza

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# STOP FUNDING WAR and OCCUPATION

The stakes in stopping illegal U.S. war and its consequences have never been higher.

# 5 years of war on Iraq

On the fifth anniversary of the Iraq war, join us in a series of actions to give voice – and visible action – to the demand for peace with justice at home and abroad.

This spring will mark five years since the U.S. invasion of Iraq – where brutal occupation continues with no end in sight. U.S. military aggression with high civilian casualties in nearby Afghanistan is expanding. Leaders in both parties are threatening to invade Iran and Pakistan. And the government

continues to bankroll Israeli occupation of Palestine and the starvation in Gaza, as well as ongoing U.S. aggression against a host of other countries around the globe, from Colombia and Venezuela to Haiti and the Philippines.

**Sponsored by Chicago's 5th Year Anti-War Coalition**

For more info or to get materials to help spread the word, visit [chicagomassaction.org](http://chicagomassaction.org), call 773.536.0098, or email [contactform@m20coalition.net](mailto:contactform@m20coalition.net)

Endorsers include (list in formation): 8th Day Center for Justice \* Albany Park, North Park, Mayfair Neighbors for Peace and Justice \* American Friends Service Committee \* American Muslims For Palestine \* ANSWER Chicago \* Arab American Action Network \* Catholic Schoolgirls Against the War \* Chicago Area CodePINK \* Chicago Coalition Against War & Racism \* Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights \* Chicago Labor Against the War \* Chicago Media Action \* Chicago No War On Iran Coalition \* Chicago Progressive Alliance \* Chicago Socialist Party \* Chicago World Can't Wait! Dive Out the Bush Regime! \* Chicagoland Coalition for Civil Liberties and Rights \* Chicagoans Against Apartheid in Palestine \* Christian Peacemaker Teams - Chicago \* Cook County Green Party \* DuPage Against War Now (DAWN) \* Fox Valley Citizens for Peace and Justice \* Freedom Road Socialist Organization \* Friends of Leon Berger \* Gay Liberation Network \* HammerHard MediaWorks \* Illinois School of the Americas Watch \* International Socialist Organization \* International Solidarity Movement - Chicago \* Iraq Veterans Against the War \* Labor Beat \* Labor Express \* Labor's Militant Voice \* National Lawyers Guild - Chicago Chapter \* Near West Citizens for Peace & Justice \* Neighbors for Peace \* Nicaragua Solidarity Network \* North Shore Coalition for Peace and Justice \* North Suburban Peace Initiative \* Northwest Peace & Education Project \* Northwest Suburban NOW \* Oak Park Coalition for Truth and Justice \* Oak Park Friends Meeting \* Palestine Solidarity Group \* Pax Christi - St. Gertrude's \* Peace Pledge Chicago \* Sangat \* South Siders for Peace \* St. Harold's Community \* UIC Students for a Democratic Society \* Voices for Creative Non-Violence \* Wellington Avenue United Church of Christ