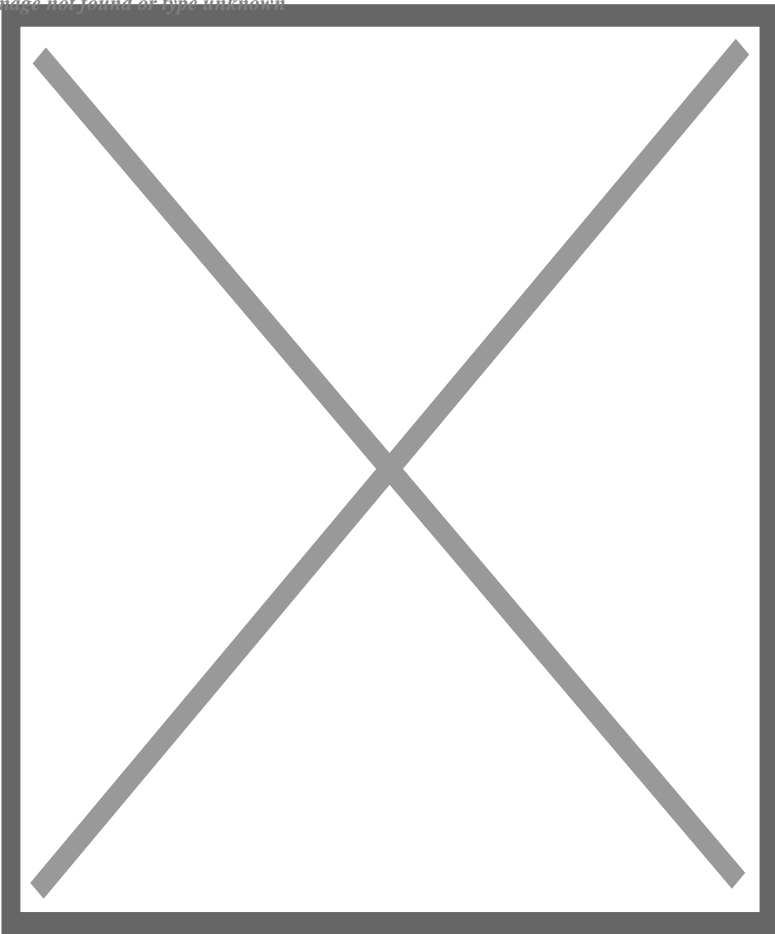


Twenty years after invasion, most Americans view Iraq war as mistake

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Washington, March 20 (RHC)-- Two decades after the United States and the United Kingdom invaded Iraq, the majority of Americans have come to the realization that the war, which left over one million people dead and ruined the Arab country, was a mistake, according to a poll.

The Axios/Ipsos poll released this week showed that while two-thirds of Americans approved of the military action in 2003, 61 percent now believe it was the wrong decision.

On March 20, 2003, the U.S. and Britain invaded Iraq in blatant violation of international law and under the pretext of finding WMDs; but no such weapons were ever discovered in Iraq. More than one million Iraqis were killed as the result of the U.S.-led invasion, and subsequent occupation of the country, according to the California-based investigative organization Project Censored.

The U.S. war in Iraq cost American taxpayers \$1.7 trillion with an additional \$490 billion in benefits owed to war veterans, expenses that could grow to more than \$6 trillion over the next four decades counting interest, according to a study called Costs of War Project by the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University.

When the U.S. ground invasion of Iraq began twenty years ago, just 26 percent of Americans in a Pew poll opposed the war. While 83 percent of Republicans supported the invasion, 52 percent of Democrats were in favor of war against Iraq.

Two decades later, 58 percent of Republicans still insist the U.S. was right to invade. Only 26 percent of Democrats still think it was a good idea. Sixty-seven percent of Americans don't believe the war in Iraq made the U.S. any safer, according to the Ipsos poll, which was conducted last week among 1,018 Americans over 18 years old.

A damning White House memo had revealed details of the so-called "deal in blood" forged by former British Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush over the Iraq war. The document, titled "Secret... Memorandum for the President," was sent by then-U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell to President Bush on March 28, 2002, a week before Bush's summit with Blair at his Crawford ranch in Texas.

The sensational memo revealed that Blair had agreed to support the war a year before the invasion even started, while publicly the British prime minister was working to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The document also disclosed that Blair agreed to act as a spin doctor for Bush and convince a skeptical public that Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction, which actually did not exist.

In response, Bush would flatter Blair and give the impression that London was not Washington's poodle but an equal partner in the "special relationship." Powell told Bush that Blair "will be with us" on the Iraq war, and assured the president that "the UK will follow our lead in the Middle East."

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