

people from the venom that will spew from this for those who want to keep the real cost of this war in human lives as far from public view as possible, because no one who knows the truth could stand and let it go on.

Joshua Holland, a journalist at AlterNet, broke the news online the other day. I enter his story into the RECORD, which includes a link directly to the Opinion Research site where people can read the entire research survey online. It was conducted in 15 out of Iraq's 18 provinces during mid August.

In his speech last week, the President referred to Anbar Province as a model of success. The research company did not even visit Anbar or Karbala for security reasons. And they were not allowed to conduct their field research in Irbil.

While the President is willing to stand up and say that he sees signs of success, the survey found that in Baghdad alone, almost half the houses say they have lost at least one member of their family. That's the reality in the largest Iraqi city, which has the largest concentration of U.S. military forces. Baghdad may have a fortified green zone for U.S. diplomats and Iraqi government officials, but the rest of the people live in a bloody red zone, where the killing has claimed someone from 50 percent of the households.

The President cannot claim signs of success in Iraq when his stubborn determination to remain is dissolving Baghdad into a dead zone. The civilian carnage is not isolated in Baghdad. Other major cities also registered dramatic civilian murder rates that would make the world weep at the staggering loss of humanity occurring in Iraq.

For a long time, I and other Members have spoken out about the number of U.S. soldiers killed or gravely wounded in Iraq, and we must never forget the sacrifices made by American soldiers and the painful losses suffered by American families across this country. But Congress must not ignore the overwhelming loss of life in Iraq. News that 1 million Iraqi civilians have been killed should compel us to get the U.S. forces out of Iraq immediately.

I know and respect many of my Republican colleagues. Our politics may differ, but our principle to protect innocent people does not. How many more Iraqis must die? The carnage will continue as long as Republicans in Congress wear the blinders that the President hands out to enforce allegiance to his blind and bloody armed occupation in Iraq.

For the sake of humanity, remove the blinders and speak the truth to power. The Iraq war is a humanitarian catastrophe on a scale that exceeds the genocide in Rwanda. We claimed we didn't know about Rwanda. We can't claim that any more about Iraq

[From AlterNet, Sept. 17, 2007]

IRAQ DEATH TOLL RIVALS RWANDA GENOCIDE,  
CAMBODIAN KILLING FIELDS  
(By Joshua Holland)

A new study estimates that 1.2 million Iraqis have met violent deaths since Bush and Cheney chose to invade.

According to a new study, 1.2 million Iraqis have met violent deaths since the 2003 invasion, the highest estimate of war-related fatalities yet. The study was done by the British polling firm ORB, which conducted face-to-face interviews with a sample of over 1,700 Iraqi adults in 15 of Iraq's 18 provinces. Two provinces—al-Anbar and Karbala—were too dangerous to canvass, and officials in a third, Irbil, didn't give the researchers a permit to do their work. The study's margin of error was plus-minus 2.4 percent. Field workers asked residents how many members of their own household had been killed since the invasion. More than one in five respondents said that at least one person in their home had been murdered since March of 2003. One in three Iraqis also said that at least some neighbors "actually living on [their] street" had fled the carnage, with around half of those having left the country.

In Baghdad, almost half of those interviewed reported at least one violent death in their household.

Before the study's release, the highest estimate of Iraqi deaths had been around 650,000 in the landmark Johns Hopkins' study published in the Lancet, a highly respected and peer-reviewed British medical journal. Unlike that study, which measured the difference in deaths from all causes during the first three years of the occupation with the mortality rate that existed prior to the invasion, the ORB poll looked only at deaths due to violence.

The poll's findings are in line with the rolling estimate maintained on the Just Foreign Policy website, based on the Johns Hopkins' data, that stands at just over 1 million Iraqis killed as of this writing.

These numbers suggest that the invasion and occupation of Iraq rivals the great crimes of the last century—the human toll exceeds the 800,000 to 900,000 believed killed in the Rwandan genocide in 1994, and is approaching the number (1.7 million) who died in Cambodia's infamous "Killing Fields" during the Khmer Rouge era of the 1970s.

While the stunning figures should play a major role in the debate over continuing the occupation, they probably won't. That's because there are three distinct versions of events in Iraq—the bloody criminal nightmare that the "reality-based community" has to grapple with, the picture the commercial media portrays and the war that the occupation's last supporters have conjured up out of thin air. Similarly, American discourse has also developed three different levels of Iraqi casualties. There's the approximately 1 million killed according to the best epidemiological research conducted by one of the world's most prestigious scientific institutions, there's the 75,000–80,000 (based on news reports) the Washington Post and other commercial media allow, and there's the clean and antiseptic blood-free war the administration claims to have fought (recall that they dismissed the Lancet findings out of hand and yet offered no numbers of their own). Here's the troubling thing, and one reason why opposition to the war isn't even more intense than it is: Americans were asked in an AP poll conducted earlier this year how many Iraqi civilians they thought had been killed as a result of the invasion and occupation, and the median answer they gave was 9,890. That's less than a third of the number of civilian deaths confirmed by U.N. monitors in 2006 alone.

Most of that disconnect is probably a result of American exceptionalism—the United States is, by definition, the good guy, and good guys don't launch wars of choice that result in over a million people being massacred. Never mind that that's exactly what the data show; acknowledging as much creates intolerable cognitive dissonance for most Americans, so as a nation, we won't.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER  
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Persons in the gallery must refrain from displays of approval or disapproval of the proceedings.

SHOULD WE BE SURPRISED? NOT  
REALLY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, it is 4:10 and we have finished the work of today. Should I be surprised? I wish I wouldn't be surprised. I was going to give the new majority a chance to get their sea legs in about 6 months to manage the floor so that we would work throughout the day, but I continue to get disappointed at our early departure hours from the floor.

I have got numerous dates from throughout the year where we have stopped work: January 11 at 3:26 p.m.; 17 January, 5:52 p.m.; 23 January, 2:40 p.m.; 4:23 p.m., 2:44 p.m., 2:28 p.m., 4:58 p.m., 3:01 p.m., 2:51 p.m., 3:21, 3:46. Yesterday I think we left work at 3:30. Today we leave work at 4.

The problem, Mr. Speaker, is that just because we are here more days a week doesn't mean we are doing any more work. Many of us who would like to be home to visit with our constituents or be home to visit with our families would say let's work in the evening, let's work at 6 p.m., let's work at 7 p.m., let's go to 10 p.m. By golly, let's go to 11 o'clock at night. Let's be brave. Let's be courageous.

We know there are many issues that the American public want us to address. We heard the concern from my colleague just before. But where are we? We're done for the day. No more business. Now it is just Members coming to the floor and speaking what is on their mind. What is on my mind is we ought to be about the business that we are sent here to do.

I understand the new majority, and I wanted to cut them some slack on the first 6 months. Five days a week. Let's work. That's fine. But now we're past that time. Now we should be able to say: The days we are here in Washington, let's work. Let's start at 10, let's go to 6, let's go to 8, let's go to 10. Let's get our work done and then allow 435 Members to go back to their districts to do their town hall meetings, to visit with their constituents, to take care of the business.

Not only that, but most of us live at home. Most of our families live in the