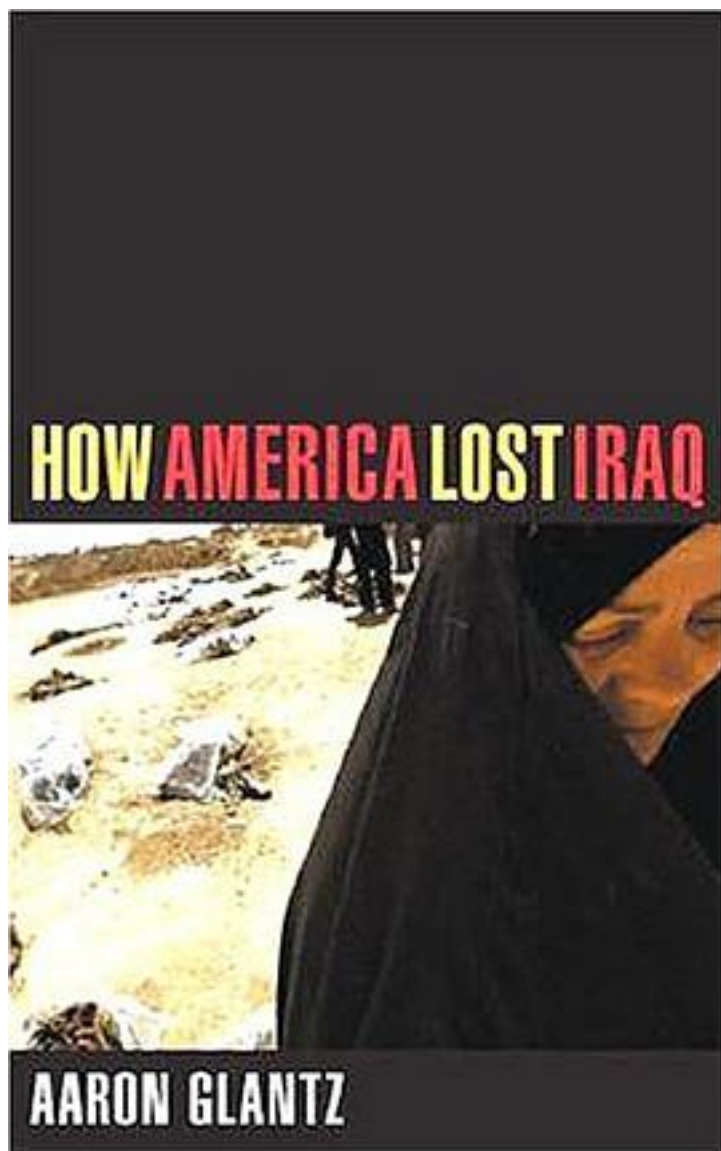


How America Lost Iraq



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A reporter in Iraq shows how the U.S. squandered its early victories and goodwill among the Iraqi people, and allowed the newly freed society to slip into violence and chaos.

As a reporter for the staunchly antiwar Pacifica Radio, twenty-seven-year-old Aaron Glantz had spent much of early 2003 warning of catastrophe if the U.S. invaded Iraq. But, as he watched the statue of Saddam topple, he wondered whether he had been mistaken: In interviews with regular Iraqis, he found wide support for the Americans.

Then, public opinion changed.

In early 2004, the U.S. military initiated a completely unprovoked bombing campaign against the population of Fallujah, increasing support for an armed resistance. The attack confounded many anti-Saddam Iraqis, and plunged the nation into chaos. In *How America Lost Iraq*, Glantz tells his story of working on the front lines, while revealing truths that most media outlets have missed or failed to report. For instance, 50 percent of the U.S.-trained Iraqi army has either mutinied or refused to fight; the Iraqi public has sustained appalling civilian casualties; corporate contractors including Halliburton and Bechtel have failed to supply Iraqis with the basic necessities of daily life, such as clean water and electricity; and a respected poll shows that 82 percent of Iraqis want the U.S. to leave.

Here is the brutally honest account of a reporter who discovered how popular the U.S. presence was in Iraq-and who then watched this popularity disappear as the Bush administration mishandled the war, leaving us with the intractable conflict we face today.

Starred Review. The failure of the American adventure in Iraq is all the more tragic for its promising beginnings, according to this engrossing memoir of the occupation and insurgency. Glantz, a correspondent for the progressive Pacifica radio network, arrived in Iraq immediately after the fall of Baghdad. Against his editors' expectations, he discovered that, although tried by the chaos and lack of basic services, most Iraqis applauded the United States for overthrowing Saddam Hussein. Returning in 2004, he found that goodwill squandered, as Iraqis grew increasingly angry at the continuing absence of electricity and clean water, high unemployment, anarchy in the streets and mass imprisonment of innocent people by American soldiers who couldn't tell insurgents from civilians. With the brutal sieges of Fallujah and Najaf in April 2004, Glantz contends, the transformation of the United States in the eyes of Iraqis from liberator to oppressor was complete. Glantz's account is full of interviews with ordinary Iraqis, and from their evolving thoughts and experiences he builds a critique of the many American misconceptions about Iraq, one that castigates equally the left's knee-jerk preconceptions, the occupation authorities' cluelessness and heavy-handed misrule and the media's lack of interest in the suffering of Iraqis. The result is a nuanced and hard-hitting indictment.

Agent, Michael Bourret at Dystel & Goderich Literary Management. (May)

Glantz is a reporter for the leftist-leaning Pacifica Radio. On the eve of the American invasion, he held rather predictable views; an American invasion would be folly, dictated by our thirst for cheap oil. Once he arrived in Iraq after the invasion, Glantz acknowledged his surprise. Among many Iraqis, there was genuine elation that

Saddam's tyranny had been overthrown. If the American presence wasn't viewed with jubilation, it was at least accepted as a necessary but temporary evil. Unfortunately, according to Glantz, the Americans quickly squandered this advantage. Because of the arrogance and incompetence of the military and private contractors, electrical power wasn't restored, drinking water remained polluted, and citizens remained at the mercy of looters and thugs. The heavy hand of the military at Abu Ghraib prison and during the assault on the city of Fallujah further alienated public opinion. This is not a balanced work; Glantz clearly wants to score points against American policy, and he shows little sympathy for the difficult decisions made during a military occupation. Still, his views are well presented and deserve serious consideration.

Jay Freeman

Entering Iraq after the fall of the Ba'athist government, Pacifica Radio reporter Glantz produced radio dispatches on the Anglo-American occupation of a substantially different quality than the reporting of his corporate media colleagues, who by and large seemed content to act as stenographers for military and Coalition Authority officials in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone. In contrast, Glantz sought out the voices of ordinary Iraqis. In this memoir of his experiences in Iraq, he chronicles the "dysfunctional occupation," suggesting through his narrative that Iraqis were largely supportive of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, but that heavy-handed American military tactics and the complete failure to get Iraq's infrastructure up and running again managed to get wary Iraqi support to utterly evaporate. Along the way he provides a portrait of the occupation not usually available to American audiences, reporting on checkpoint shootings, reconstruction corruption, the devastation of Fallujah, mass detentions, and other matters that seem destined to make the occupation of Iraq a total failure.

Height (cm) 22.4 Width (cm) 16

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