

# Coincidences ... or not

Speaking from the deck of the newest U.S. aircraft carrier, Trump announced part of his plan presented to Congress to increase this year's defense budget by 10%

Elson Concepción

• TO demonstrate the country's strength, superiority, and wealth, there is a certain tradition among Presidents of the United States to make announcements about wars, defense budgets, and military matters aboard the most modern and costly aircraft carriers.

Such was the case on March 3, when President Donald Trump, speaking from the deck of aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford, in Newport News, Virginia, noted: "We will give our military the tools you need to prevent war and, if required, to fight war and only do one thing – you know what that is? Win! Win!"

The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, considered a floating fort, was built at a cost of 13 billion dollars. Imagine how many hungry people could have been fed with that money!

With the sea breeze as a backdrop, Trump announced part of his plan presented to Congress to increase this year's military spending by 10%, equivalent to a further \$54 billion for the nation's already super inflated defense budget.

There is no doubt that in a country where the Industrial Military Complex decides policies and changes the way leaders think, it is very important that money flows to those manufacturing arms, selling weapons and encouraging wars.

Trump's claim that the objective is to win wars echoes that of his predecessors. No one commits to a fight in the belief of losing.

Yet, to this day, absolutely all the wars the United States has waged in past decades have been defeats for Washington and for all of humanity.

This happened in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. It was the case beforehand, in Yugoslavia, destroyed by 78 days and nights of bombing. Of all these conflicts, which have left open, unhealed wounds, the result has been poorer and hungrier populations, more migrants, more governmental and political instability and the propagation of terrorist groups, like weeds, that today threaten various regions, mainly in the Middle East.

What is happening now brings to mind the beginning of what George W. Bush called his "crusade against terrorism."

The date chosen to invade Iraq was March 20, 2003. The arguments: Saddam Hussein's government - according to Washington - was linked to Al Qaeda and possessed weapons of mass destruction.

The United States sought to take control of one of the countries with the largest oil reserves in the world, and to achieve this goal, the U.S. president called on the 3rd Infantry Division, 1st Marine Division, 101st Airborne Division, 173rd Airborne Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, the Special Forces, and the 1st Armoured Division, the latter of the United Kingdom,



The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford, cost approximately 13 billion dollars.

Washington's ally in its warmongering adventure in Iraq.

In total, the U.S. forces in combat exceeded 192,000 soldiers, in addition to 45,000 from the United Kingdom, 2,000 from Australia, 194 from Poland and others.

The armament assigned to Iraq included 800 M1 Abrams tanks, 600 M3-M3 Bradley Fighting Vehicles, 100 AH-64 Apache helicopters, 200 AH-1 SuperCobra helicopters, 100 CH-47 Chinook, UH-60 Black Hawk and CH-53 Sea Stallion transport helicopters, between 50 and 60 F-14 Tomcat fighter aircraft, 90 F-15 Eagle, 75 F-16 Fighting Falcon, and between 180-220 McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet fighter aircraft, 50 A-10 aircraft, 36 B-1B, B-52 and B-2 bombers, 60 Harrier AV-8B strike aircraft, and four marine battle groups including the aircraft carriers Constellation, Harry S. Truman, A. Lincoln, and T. Roosevelt. To protect Israel, U.S. forces deployed three Patriot missile batteries in Jordan.

This was imperialism in all its glory, and to be sure, it also took care of protecting its unconditional ally: Israel.

Iraq was torn apart. It is estimated that more than one million people were killed, injured, or maimed by U.S. shrapnel. The banned weapons of mass destruction never appeared, because they didn't exist. But Iraq's oil is now in the hands of mainly U.S. transnationals.

On May 1, 2003, President George W. Bush announced the end of major military operations in Iraq, from the deck of

the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln, where he offered the memorable phrase "Mission Accomplished," although he acknowledged that the alleged prohibited weapons did not exist.

In 2007, Alan Greenspan, former chairman of the U.S. central bank (the Federal Reserve), wrote in his memoirs that the real reasons for invading Iraq were not those publicly expressed, but to control Iraqi oil reserves and prevent the European Union or emerging powers such as China and India from encroaching on them.

A few years later, on October 22, 2010, **WikiLeaks** released 391,832 U.S. Defense Department documents revealing the systematic torture of prisoners, a total of 109,032 killed in Iraq, of which 66,081 were civilians, that is 63% of casualties, among other figures.

By that time, the invasion had ended, Bush had declared "victory" and the Arab nation was torn between the terrible effects of the war, the growth of the conflict between different groups encouraged by the U.S., and the rising wave of the larger terrorist enemy, the so-called Islamic State, which - like Al Qaeda - emerged with the financial support of the United States, in its quest to destroy the progressive regimes of the region and to maintain instability, as a method to justify intervention in these nations at will.

In politics there are no fortuitous coincidences, and in the case of the United States, the decks of aircraft carriers bear witness to this fact. •

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