



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on December 23, 2014

## How Did “Withdraw All Troops” Become Adding Thousands?

Is it correct to state that after nearly eight years of war in Iraq and the loss of 4,500 American lives the United States has finally pulled all of its forces out of Iraq? The answer is an emphatic “No.” Reports in mid-December confirm that the “U.S.-led” coalition will be beefed up to 4,600 troops, most of whom will be Americans.

Has President Obama kept his oft-stated promise to pull all of America’s forces out of Afghanistan? Again, an emphatic “No.” A total of 5,500 will remain at least until the end of 2015.



Any honest examination of these two wars has to conclude that they were failures. And if anyone wants to use the adjective “colossal,” he’ll get no argument from this corner.

The Iraq War began in 2003 for two main reasons: 1) Saddam Hussein was building nuclear bombs and other “weapons of mass destruction,” and 2) Iraq was allied with al-Qaeda and was, therefore, partly responsible for the 9/11 attacks on the United States. Both of these claims have been shown to be totally false.

In February 2009, President Obama said that all U.S. forces would be withdrawn from Iraq except for 50,000. In April 2009, the President announced the end of combat in Iraq. In August 2010, Mr. Obama said “the American mission in Iraq has ended.” And in October 2011, he promised that all American forces would be out of the country by the end of 2011. The effort has cost the United States 4,490 lives, and possibly 10 times that number injured.

In mid-December 2014, however, General James Terry announced that 1,500 more troops (mostly Americans) would be added to the 3,100 still in Iraq. They are needed, according to U.S. officials, because a huge chunk of Iraq has been conquered by the forces of ISIS.

The Afghanistan War began in 2001 shortly after 9/11, and it has become the longest war in U.S. history (more than 13 years). In May 2014, U.S. officials announced that all combat operations had ended. 2,200 Americans died and 19,600 suffered wounds in Afghanistan. But outgoing Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced in December that 1,000 extra troops would be added to the 9,800 still there.

In other words, the U.S. has not withdrawn from either of these nations.

Any honest observer of conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan would have to conclude that the wars fought in both have been failures. Withdrawing completely should be the plan, not leaving thousands in each country.

Consider: Immediately after the 1941 attack at Pearl Harbor, the U.S. declared war against Japan, Germany, and Italy. Victory was achieved in what were really two separate wars, one in the Pacific and one in Europe. But there has been no declaration of war by Congress since 1941. The wars fought after WWII (Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan) brought stalemates or defeats. The truth is that each of



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these post-WWII conflicts was waged under the oversight of the UN or its NATO (or SEATO) subsidiary. All of which leads to two conclusions: 1) America should bring all of its troops home, and 2) [the U.S should withdraw from the United Nations](#). Maintaining national independence cannot be done while our leaders continue to submit to the UN.

*John F. McManus is president of [The John Birch Society](#) and publisher of The New American. This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS blog](#) and is reprinted here with permission.*





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