



In the years since, the U.S. effort in Iraq has veered from the brink of calamity to the threshold of surprising success. With the remaining U.S. troops now packing to leave, possibly for good, casualties and costs will be tallied one last time.

More elusive is a firm judgment on the net benefit of the American sacrifice, the more than 4,400 dead, the tens of thousands injured and the untold numbers suffering unseen psychological wounds for years to come.

The invasion, occupation and transition to Iraqi government control lasted far longer than predicted, cost more than imagined and left a town like Silvana, population 90, to wonder why a war so far away brought grief so close to home.

The sacrifice of so many lives like Hebert's helped turn U.S. public opinion firmly against the war by the time Barack Obama was campaigning for president in 2008. Three years later, young Americans still die in Iraq even though the war is widely seen as over.

It is also widely seen as a mistake, and by some as a waste.

TVNL Comment: No, not a mistake. The war was a calculated attack on a non belligerent nation, for profit, for power and for greed. Argue that, if you can.

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