

Why We Must Bring The Troops Home Now

The war and occupation have inflamed terrorism, making our lives more dangerous and insecure.

The war has turned more people around the world against the US and has further legitimized the use of armed force. If the US government rejected the legitimacy of all aggressive wars and occupations our country would be in a much better position to convince others that war and terrorism are wrong.

The cost of the Iraq war is soaring: \$166 billion in US tax dollars and counting.

Massachusetts' share is already \$3.7 billion. Instead of spending tax money on the occupation, it should be used to help both Iraq and the US create jobs, relieve poverty, and improve health and education. This war is stealing our children's future.

There is no end in sight to the conflict.

Even the CIA admits that Iraqi public opposition to the US is growing. Armed attacks have not let up and non-violent protests are constant. The Bush administration plans to keep US troops there until at least 2007. Even Senator Kerry has talked of sending 40,000 more troops. Prolonging the occupation means compounding the death, misery and costs.

The occupation of Iraq is unjustified, immoral, and illegal.

Iraq posed no threat to the US, had no weapons of mass destruction and no ties to Al Qaeda. Even the US Army War College admits this was a "war of choice," not of "self-defense." To use modern weapons to kill and maim mostly innocent people and to take over Iraq was therefore unconscionable. It was a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and international law. It makes the world a more dangerous, unstable place.

The death toll on all sides is mounting.

More than 40,000 Iraqis have been killed or injured, and many more have lost their homes and property. More than 829 US soldiers have died in Iraq as of mid-June—more than died in the first four years of the Vietnam War. Up to 20,000 more have been evacuated for medical reasons.

The occupation is making life miserable for ordinary Iraqis.

Public safety, especially for women and children, is almost non-existent. Unemployment is more than 50 percent. Wages have fallen from pre-war levels. Water and electricity are scarce. The daily deaths and humiliations are a breeding ground for terrorists. The war and destruction must end in order to improve conditions.

Even while praising US military veterans, President Bush has betrayed them.

Bush cut the Veterans Administration budget by \$1.8 billion this year. 40,000 veterans – including vets wounded in Iraq – are on waiting lists to see doctors for the first time. If reelected, the VA will get \$1.2 billion less than it requested for 2005.

The proposed transition to Iraqi power is a sham.

As long as the US troops remain en masse, the US will be the true power – all others will be mere figureheads who serve at the US's pleasure. Iraqis are demanding direct elections, but the US refuses for fear of not being able to control the outcome. This is a war to enrich multinational corporations and control oil, not to establish democracy or stop tyranny.

The war and occupation are isolating the US from the nations and peoples of the world.

The United Nations refused to endorse the war and public opinion polls show that the overwhelming majority of people in other countries oppose the occupation. To rebuild goodwill, the US government must admit it was wrong, reject the idea that might makes right and abide by international law.

If the US leaves, the Iraqi people can reassert control over their own country.

The Iraqis whom the US has handpicked to serve Washington's interests should not be given control of the country. The UN should not participate in the US occupation. But, once the US agrees to leave, if the Iraqi people request it, bodies like the UN and/or the Arab League should help the Iraqis set up mechanisms through which the Iraqi people can choose their own leaders. The US should then pour billions into rebuilding the country it has spent so much to destroy.

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