

Why the US Must Withdraw from Iraq Now

Many people of goodwill now accept that the Bush Administration's stated reasons for going to war in Iraq, namely that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and that he was aligned with al-Qaeda, are not true. Yet, many are reluctant to advocate an immediate, orderly withdrawal of US and Coalition forces coupled with a complete end to the occupation and US control of the Iraqi government.

The reasons offered for staying in Iraq don't hold water.

"We've got to finish the job."

It's not clear what precisely "the job" is. If "the job" is to get rid of Saddam Hussein and end the rule of the oppressive Ba'ath Party, that has already been accomplished. If "the job" is to disarm the weapons of mass destruction, that was done several years in advance of the invasion of 2003. If "the job" is to sever links between Iraq and al-Qaeda, they never existed. Rather, continued occupation of Iraq may well promote operational linkages between the anti-US resistance and al-Qaeda.

"We can't leave until we establish democracy in Iraq."

The US occupation has not promoted democracy or the rule of law. It has engaged in the routine torture of Iraqi prisoners, has cancelled local government elections, and has detained without cause thousands of Iraqis, who continue to be held to this day. The US occupation has repeatedly attacked unarmed civilians with massive military firepower, has censored newspapers and bombed television stations deemed unfriendly, and has engaged in collective punishment. The US occupation has failed to meet the minimum requirements of international law with regard to the obligations of an occupying power by compelling the Iraqis themselves to pay much of the cost of the occupation, and by purporting to sell off public assets without approval of a legitimate Iraqi government. Billions of dollars of reconstruction aid is "missing" without any accounting.

The US occupation is not promoting democracy in Iraq (or in the U.S.) The Iraqi people must decide the form and policies of their government, free from coercion by the US government and military. The American people must defend their rights and liberties which have been eroded by the USA PATRIOT Act, the mass roundup of immigrants and restrictions on the right to protest.

"We can't leave until Iraq is stable and the danger of civil war is averted."

The US occupation is the principal factor making Iraq unstable. While it is impossible to predict whether a US withdrawal will lead to more violence in the future, it is accurate to describe the present as very close to civil war. The US military and economic presence is a prime target for Iraqi groups with all sorts of nationalist, religious and political views. Much of the Iraqi population is giving tacit support to those opposed to the occupation. As long as the US dominates the Alawi government through its embedded officials in Iraqi ministries, irrevocable decrees from the Brenner regime and 130,000 US troops occupying the country, the Alawi government will have no legitimacy in the eyes of its own citizens and will be unable to create stability. A prompt, orderly withdrawal of US forces represents a more realistic approach to ending the violence among Iraqis.

"If we leave Iraq, it will hurt threaten US security and adversely effect the Middle East."

A prompt orderly US withdrawal from Iraq will deprive al-Qaeda of its single best recruitment tool, and will make the US safer. Even if a post-withdrawal Iraqi government is similar to that established by Khomeini in Iran, the US and its allies will be substantially safer than we are in the current chaos.

Speak out for the logic of withdrawal.



Brooklyn Parents for Peace

www.brooklynpeace.org

718-624-5921