

WHY WE DEMAND AN IMMEDIATE END TO THE OCCUPATION OF IRAQ AND WHAT WE MEAN...

1. The Iraq War is Illegal

The invasion and ongoing occupation of Iraq violates numerous principles of international law, particularly the Geneva Convention and the Nuremberg Charter. These international laws prohibit the occupation of sovereign nations, the indiscriminate bombing of civilian populations, the killing of civilians, torture, and detention.

2. We Oppose the Human Cost of the War

The US occupation of Iraq has meant as many as 650,000 civilian deaths, according to the British journal, The Lancet. The US occupation has also resulted in thousands of wounded Iraqis, with long-term health consequences because of the United States military's use of Depleted Uranium weapons and the devastating impact of more than a decade of the harshest sanctions ever imposed on a country. The Iraqi infrastructure has been devastated from the US bombings, which makes it difficult for most Iraqis to have access to basic resources. We also oppose the use of torture and rape as tactics of control and oppression, both of which have been widespread.

3. We Oppose the Economic Restructuring of Iraq

The Iraqi Constitution was re-written during the reign of L. Paul Bremer in such a way that gave multinational corporations greater access to and control of Iraq's economy. In addition, the restructuring of the economy has meant significant privatization of previous public services. We oppose this privatization and the newly proposed law that would allow for foreign control of the majority of Iraq's oil resources. Workers rights have also been diminished since the beginning of the US occupation. We support Iraqi workers rights, particularly their right to organize.

4. We Demand an Immediate Withdrawal of all US Military Personnel

An immediate withdrawal of US Military personnel means no benchmarks or conditions. This means no US military bases, no troops, and no advisors. We do not support any of the current proposals put forward by either the Republicans or the Democrats. We support an immediate withdrawal, which is supported by a majority of Iraqis. An increasing number of US troops are also supporting an immediate withdrawal, with many signing onto a statement known as the Appeal for Redress.

5. We Demand an Immediate Withdrawal of all Private Mercenaries

There are thousands of what are usually referred to as private "security forces" in Iraq working for companies like Blackwater and DynCorp. We oppose their presence in Iraq either as subcontractors of the Department of Defense or private entities. The use of these mercenary forces is just another form of privatization and with no accountability. The last law put in place by L. Paul Bremer in June of 2004, known as Order 17, prevents private mercenary forces from being prosecuted for war crimes.

6. The US should pay Iraq Reparations for the Damage done during the 1991 War, the 13 years of sanctions, and the Current War and Occupation

Once US troops and private mercenaries have left, we believe that the United States government should pay Iraq massive reparations. These reparations could be used to rebuild the country which has been devastated by two US wars and the 12 years of sanctions. Beyond the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure, people's homes were destroyed, and their lands devastated. The destruction and theft of Iraq's cultural wealth should also be repaid. Many monuments and historical sites were destroyed and thousands of artifacts were looted from museums.

7. We Oppose Providing Corporate Welfare to War Profiteers in this War

Billions of dollars allocated for the Iraq War have gone to private contractors for services previously done by the US military, such as providing and preparing meals for US soldiers, laundry, and transportation. Many of these taxpayer-provided subsidies have been given to companies as no-bid contracts. One consequence of this process has been that while corporations are making huge profits off the war, funding for body armor for US troops has been limited.

8. We Oppose the Domestic Cost of the Iraq War

While billions of dollars are being pumped into the war in Iraq, massive cuts are being made in the US. The State of Michigan has made massive cuts to social services and is proposing more. The City of Grand Rapids has cut funding for social services every year that the US has been at war in Iraq. According to the National Priorities Project, Michigan taxpayers have sent over \$11 billion to finance the War/Occupation of Iraq. Imagine what that \$11 billion could be used for if it stayed in Michigan. Taxpayer money that has left Grand Rapids since the US war started is around \$217 million. Again, how could that money serve the needs of those in Grand Rapids?

9. We Support the US Troops by Bringing Them Home Now

Supporting the troops means not putting them in situations where they will kill innocent Iraqis. Supporting the troops means not putting them in a position of being killed or wounded. Supporting the troops means not exposing them to Depleted Uranium (DU), which we know causes numerous health problems. Supporting the troops means providing them with the best medical - both physical and psychological - care when they return. Supporting the troops means providing resources to them to support their families upon return, families that have been devastated from the war. We stand with the growing number of Iraq veterans and military families that oppose this illegal, bloody war.

10. We Demand that the United State Media Provide Better Coverage of the Iraq War

The United States media failed the American public by not questioning the reasons for going to war. The media continues to rely primarily on official sources, such as government and military spokespersons. There is rarely any substantive critique of the United States' occupation of Iraq. The human cost of the war is rarely reported on, unless it is United States troops deaths or deaths caused by Iraqi "insurgents." The media rarely provides an Iraqi perspective on what is happening in Iraq and when they do it is disproportionately Iraqi officials. There is also limited and often biased coverage of US domestic opposition to the war. Despite all this, most Americans are opposed to the War/Occupation of Iraq.

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