

January 20,
2005
Inauguration
day

BRING OREGON'S TROOPS HOME

End the US Occupation of Iraq



Citizens of Oregon, including families of soldiers, are calling for Governor Ted Kulongoski to bring Oregon's troops home. According to the Oregon Blue Book, "By virtue of office, the governor is the peacetime commander-in-chief of the militia and may issue lawful regulations for its governance." This means that absent a formal declaration of war, the President cannot call up the National Guard, or the reserves, without his compliance. The war in Iraq was not declared and, as has been proven by the lack of evidence of an Al Qaida-Saddam Hussein link, is not part of the so-called "War on Terror" which has been used to justify the war on Afghanistan and other "emergency" measures.

While polls show a 56 percent of Americans feel the war in Iraq is "not worth fighting" (*Washington Post*, December 21), 56 percent *also* feel the troops should stay (*Associated Press*, December 21).

Here are some reasons that both may be true. See how you feel once you have the facts:

MYTH: "WE HAVE TO STAY THERE OR THERE WILL BE CIVIL WAR"

A civil war in Iraq, projected to be along ethnic lines among the Kurds in the north, the Shiites in the south, and the Sunnis in central Iraq, is becoming more likely due to U.S. pressure to hold elections on the arbitrary deadline of January 30. Because several major Sunni groups have asked for the election to be delayed while the U.S. insists on its own timeline, the result may be an election in which a significant minority of the population is not represented.

The Nobel peace prize-winning organization American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) states: "We are convinced that the presence of U.S. troops is a destabilizing force in the region and contributes to the increasing loss of life" (December 22).

MYTH: "NOBODY IS CALLING FOR THE TROOPS TO COME HOME"

In addition to the AFSC, more unlikely sources have begun to call for a U.S. withdrawal. *USA Today* founder Al Neuharth, a World War II veteran, wrote in a December 23 column that "the best way to support our troops thrust by unwise commanders- in-chief into ill-advised adventures like Vietnam and Iraq is to bring them home. Sooner rather than later. That should be our New Year's resolution."

Republican U.S. Representative Howard Cable of Greensboro, NC, a "close ally of President Bush," voted to give Bush the power to attack Iraq but now says "What we have are Iraqis killing Iraqis and American troops,...a troop withdrawal ought to be an option." Republican Rep. James A. Leach of Iowa stated over a year ago that "the United States should begin a withdrawal that would be complete by the end of 2004" (*Associated Press*, January 9).

Meanwhile, the "Coalition of the Willing" continues to lose support, as Spain withdrew its troops in April, and Hungary, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania announced plans to take troops out in the coming months (*Associated Press*, November 4) and the Ukraine's newly-elected leader Viktor Yushchenko stated that withdrawing troops was a high priority for his new administration (*Agence France-Presse*, January 10).

NO WMDS: One of the major justifications for the invasion of Iraq was proven false when Charles Duelfer officially ended the search for weapons of mass destruction in December (*Reuters*, January 12).



MYTH: "SOLDIERS ON THE FRONT LINES BELIEVE IN THE MISSION"

A *Military Times* poll taken in December shows only 66 percent of combat veterans of Iraq say the war is "worth fighting," with the overall support among the military at 60 percent (*USA Today*, December 27). Incidentally, 75 percent of the military members polled oppose a draft.

MYTH: THE CASUALTIES IN THIS WAR ARE NOT AS BAD AS OTHER WARS

On January 4, the military acknowledged that 10,252 soldiers have been wounded in Iraq, while (at that time) 1335 troops had died (*Associated Press*, January 4). This casualty rate is similar to and perhaps higher than the early years of the war in Vietnam, adjusting for advancements in medical and other technology (*Slate Magazine*, December 27). The Department of Defense admits that far more troops have been evacuated from combat for various health-related reasons: "More than 15,000 troops with so-called 'non-battle' injuries and diseases have been evacuated from Iraq" (*CBS-TV*, November 22).

Meanwhile, figures for wounded Iraqis are not available, but the number of Iraqi dead due to the US invasion and occupation is likely between 15,229 (iraqbodycount.org, January 11) and 100,000 (*The Lancet*, a British medical journal, October 29).

MYTH: THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR TORTURING IRAQI PRISONERS ARE BEING PROSECUTED

While some of the lower-level soldiers who abused Iraqis in the Abu Ghraib prison have been sentenced and others are on trial, those who created the atmosphere and/or directly ordered the torture are not even under investigation. Alberto Gonzales, who wrote the infamous memo dismissing the Geneva Convention on torture as "quaint," has been nominated by President Bush to rise from White House counsel to Attorney General.

Documents released to the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in December indicated that a two-page FBI e-mail references an Executive Order in which the President directly authorized interrogation techniques including sleep deprivation, stress positions, the use of military dogs, and "sensory deprivation through the use of hoods, etc." The May, 2004 e-mail was sent from "On Scene Commander—Baghdad" to a handful of senior FBI officials, and "notes that the FBI has prohibited its agents from employing the techniques that the President is said to have authorized" (ACLU, December 20).

MYTH: THE U.S. WILL ONLY STAY UNTIL IRAQ IS STABILIZED

In reality, the U.S. has been building as many as 14 permanent military bases in Iraq, indicating they intend to stay far into the future (*Chicago Tribune*, March 24, 2004). It is likely that this is part of the military's new "lily pad" strategy to have strategic locations to launch military initiatives around the world (*Christian Science Monitor*, August 9). The presence of such military bases in Saudi Arabia, built to keep Iraq "in check" in the 1990s, was one of the reasons cited by Al Qaida for why they carried out the attacks on September 11, 2001.



MYTH: IRAQIS ARE BETTER OFF NOW THAN THEY WERE UNDER SADDAM HUSSEIN

Taking in all the current conditions, many Iraqis have questioned whether they were better off with the ruthless dictator Saddam Hussein than they are with the U.S. occupation.

—The US military has used chemical weapons against Iraqis, specifically napalm and phosphorous, which burn the skin of humans and set fires when used (*The Independent*, August 10, 2003 and *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 10, 2004).

—Water and electricity are still scarce nearly two years after the U.S. "liberation." While the infrastructure was deliberately destroyed by the U.S. in the "Gulf War" of 1991, many improvements had taken place by 2003 when the invasion took place. There is now just barely more electricity available than in the last year of Hussein's rule—5000 megawatts per day versus 4400, while 9000 megawatts were available prior to the 1991 war (Reuters, December 3; *Voices in the Wilderness*, December 13).

—Freedom of the press has been squelched. Acting Prime Minister Iyad Allawi shut down one paper which was critical of the U.S. presence, sparking the long battle in Najaf in the summer of 2004. Allawi has since then been giving money to Iraq's "free" press to print positive stories about the occupation's progress (*Financial Times*, January 10).

—The \$22 billion in alleged money Saddam Hussein took in from 1991 to 2003 outside of the Oil-for-Food program (which was only in place 1996-2003) was no secret. Certainly the Iraqi people may have benefitted from this money allegedly hoarded by Hussein and his cronies. But to this day, money generated by Iraq's oil sales continues to be given to countries seeking compensation resulting from Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent war (Reuters, December 9). An estimated \$5 billion was given out to companies and countries over and above what they were due (Reuters, January 9).

—Iraqi Christians, once roughly five percent of the population, lived in a tense but safe non-Islamic state under Hussein, but after the US invasion roughly 300,000 have fled Iraq due to fear of genocide against them (*Daily Telegraph*, January 8).

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CNN reported on January 5 that U.S. troops have a one in 11 chance of being killed or wounded and a one in 96 chance of being killed in battle. The *Oregonian* reported that Oregon's national guard troops have been dying at nearly three times the rate of other states (December 17).

Oregon has roughly 3 million residents, or about one percent of the US population, yet as of December 16, 9 of 142, or over 6 percent of the fatalities of National Guard troops in this conflict have been from Oregon.

Please join Peace and Justice Works, these groups, and others in calling for Oregon's troops to come home:

This flyer was prepared January 2005 by the
Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group
PO Box 42456
Portland, OR 97242
(503) 236-3065
iraq@pjw.info
www.pjw.info/Iraq.html
Contact us about emergency and regular meetings!
Regular meetings usually 2nd Tuesdays, 7 PM; next one is Feb. 8.

Portland Peaceful Response Coalition (PPRC)

PO Box 5112, Portland 97208
www.pprc-news.org
Rally Fridays, 5 PM, Pioneer Courthouse Sq.

War Resisters League - Portland

2000 NE 42nd #224, Portland 97213
(503) 238-0605
Military and Draft Counseling Project/
Oregon Community for War Tax Resistance.

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

2249 E Burnside, Portland 97214
(503) 230-9427 www.afsc.org
Quaker peace-making and human rights.

Multnomah Monthly Meeting of Friends (Quakers)

4312 SE Stark, Portland 97214
(503) 232-2822
www.multnomahfriends.org

Oregon PeaceWorks

1401 Commercial NE, Salem 97301
(503) 585-2767
opw@oregonpeaceworks.org
www.oregonpeaceworks.org

Northwest Veterans for Peace

P. O. Box 7
Banks, OR 97106
(503) 324-1804
www.peaceveterans.org

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

1819 NW Everett, Portland 97209
(503) 224-5190
www.wilpf.org
Weekly peace vigils,
Wednesdays 12 noon,
Pioneer Courthouse Square

Veterans for Peace Chapter 72

www.vfchapter72.org

Military Families Speak Out

www.mfso.org

SEND YOUR COMMENTS TO:

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