



A.W.A.R.E.
Anti-War Anti-Racism Effort

‘LIBERATION’ OR OCCUPATION?

What have been the consequences of the war in Iraq?

- Over 6,000 Iraqis killed
- Over 1,000 US troops killed or wounded
- Up to \$615 billion estimated costs
- No ‘weapons of mass destruction’ found
- Terrorist threat worse than before
- Iraq under military rule

Who supports our troops?

As temperatures in Iraq top 120 degrees and “guerillas attack Americans daily,” the US commander in Iraq announced that all troops in Iraq should expect to remain deployed for at least a year (AP 8/13/03).

The occupation could even last 5-10 more years, some experts say.

And since the President declared the “major hostilities” at an end, rising numbers of US troops have been killed or seriously injured in postwar Iraq – now officially 1000, unofficially perhaps 4000 (London Guardian, DN! 8/4/03).

Clearly this is not what the troops, their families, or war-supporters expected. Neither is the postwar cost of up to \$615 billion (AP 8/12/03).

Groups of military families like ‘Families Speak Out’ are outraged, – yet the Republicans in Washington still try to cut veterans’ benefits.

So the anti-war movement is saying the best way to ‘support the troops’ is to bring them home – now.

But aren’t we making the world safer?

The world is certainly no safer for the many Americans and Iraqis killed in the invasion.

Early on, the UN and Red Cross were “alarmed” by the thousands of Iraqi civilian deaths (AFP, 4/4/03), announcing that Iraqi hospitals are overflowing with casualties “too high to count” (AP, 4/9/03).

At least 400 of these civilians died in Iraqi hospitals bombed by US warplanes (NYT, 4/8/03; AP, 4/9/03).

No one really knows how many died, but the most comprehensive survey to date documents

over 6000 civilian deaths and 16,000 civilians injured (LAT, Reuters, Democracy Now! 8/4/03; www.iraqbodycount.net).

This is not counting the half a million Iraqi civilians who died during 11 years of sanctions.

But aren’t Iraqis leading better lives now?

Actually, growing numbers of Iraqi civilians have been killed postwar – like the six Iraqi civilians shot and killed by US forces as they tried to get home before the 11pm curfew imposed by the US (AP 8/11/03).

Days before, US troops had fired on a street market in Iraq where guns were for sale. The head of the local hospital said five Iraqi men and a child were shot dead. The US army called them “suspected former regime loyalists trafficking illegal arms”. A US army spokesman said that people in the market had “material that can make up improvised explosive devices, such as wires and switches” (AFP 8/8/03).

US troops have also shot and killed dozens of Iraqis at anti-occupation demonstrations across Iraq since the fall of Baghdad (AFP 4/15/03; NYDN 4/30/03, 5/1/03).

Such examples increase daily, each death fanning the flames of anger against the US occupation in Iraq.

But at least the Iraqis are free, right?

Hardly. An estimated 8000 Iraqi civilians have disappeared since the Iraqi government fell, as many as 5000 held y US forces “incommunicado, without access to lawyers or even the right to contact their families,” often under conditions described by Amnesty

International as “cruel, inhuman or degrading” (Newsweek 8/17/03).

And US troops recently gunned down the 13th journalist killed in Iraq, an award-winning Reuters cameraman shot in broad daylight while filming outside a US-held prison (AP 8/17/03).

In addition, thousands of Iraqi children as young as 9 years old reportedly now “toil in Dickensian desperation” 12 or more hours a day salvaging litter from the war to sell (SF Chronicle 8/13/03).

Electricity is only gradually being restored, water is short, and food aid is still slow in coming to the millions of Iraqis – mostly children – who face starvation after the collapse of UN-sponsored, Iraqi government-run rationing programs (AP 3/21/03).

Disease and crime are spreading throughout Iraq as a result.

Meanwhile, well-connected US corporations – like Halliburton, Bechtel, MCI and Stevedoring Services of America – rake in billions in US government contracts, spending Iraqi oil money without the consent of the Iraqi people (Reuters 4/19/03).

Vice Pres. Dick Cheney’s Halliburton, in particular, reported revenues “skyrocketing” to almost \$4 billion last quarter – \$26 million in clear profit (Financial Times, 8/3/03).

US forces have also established martial law in Iraq and appointed a very unpopular puppet government. The US administrator in Iraq has final say on all decisions.

But wasn’t war needed to fight terrorism?

The war with Iraq immediately inspired rising terrorist recruitment, just as the CIA had predicted before Congress (AP 4/1/03).

In fact, before the invasion of Iraq was over, US allies had discovered new terrorist plots in a dozen cities around the world (AFP 3/28/03).

One British-based research group recently ranked the US as fourth most likely to suffer a terrorist attack in the coming year, after Colombia, Israel and Pakistan.

“Another Sept. 11-style terrorist attack in the United States is highly likely,” the group reports. “US-led military action in Afghanistan and Iraq has exacerbated anti-US sentiment.” (AP 8/18/03).

And the ‘weapons of mass destruction’?

The White House has been forced to admit publicly that the accusations about Iraq’s alleged nuclear weapons program, included in the President’s State of the Union address, were false.

It has also become clear the accusations made by Sec. of State Colin Powell before the UN in February were inaccurate, too (AP 8/11/03).

In fact, US officials and experts have had to retract one alleged find after another.

For example, military officials announced that they had found a “chemical facility” in Najaf, only to later admit the site contained no chemicals (Dow Jones 3/24/03).

Then officials announced that troops had found a mobile weapons lab, only to quietly retract the story weeks later (NYT 4/28/03).

And Hussein Kamel’s testimony, which the US had used for years to prove that Iraq was

keeping banned weapons, was revealed to contain one important detail that US officials omitted: Kamel said Iraq had destroyed the weapons (Newsweek 3/3/03).

So what should be done instead?

The US must immediately turn over administration of Iraq to the UN, which will arrange for democratic elections.

The US must pay war reparations, and release frozen Iraqi assets for a democratically elected government to arrange reconstruction.

Our government must also stand behind UN decisions – especially “regional disarmament” for the Middle East and Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories – instead of selective enforcement and unilateralism.

The US must back the International Criminal Court without reservation, to see that all terrorists and war criminals come to trial, even US allies or officials.

What Can You Do?

• Protest with AWARE the first Sat. of every month 2–4pm, on N. Prospect & Marketview in Champaign.

• Meet with AWARE every Sun. 5–7 pm at the IMC, 218 W Main St. in Urbana.

• Keep informed: www.anti-war.net, www.indymedia.org, www.zmag.org, “News from Neptune” Sat. 10–11am and “Democracy Now!” weekdays 4–5pm on WEFT 90.1 FM, “Media Matters” Sun. 1–2pm on WILL 580 AM.