

The Campus Antiwar Network (CAN) is an independent, democratic, and grassroots network of campus-based antiwar committees. The points of unity of CAN are:

1. We stand opposed to all US wars of aggression.
2. We stand opposed to the occupation of Iraq.
3. We support the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination.
4. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq.
5. We demand that the US government pay reparations to the Iraqi people.
6. We stand opposed to the oppression of the Palestinian people and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
7. We stand opposed to racist scapegoating and all attacks on civil liberties.
8. We demand money for education, jobs and healthcare, not war and occupation!

Campus Antiwar Network



Occupation
is not
Liberation
2nd edition

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By Katrina Yeaw and Todd Chretien
San Francisco State University

On July 27, 2003, guns blazing, U.S. soldiers raided a house in Baghdad, killing 11 civilians, including two children, their mother and their disabled father. According to Baghdad-based journalist Robert Fisk, reporting for the British newspaper, *The Independent*:

At the scene of the killings, there was pandemonium. While U.S. troops were loading the bullet-shattered cars on trucks -- and trying to stop cameramen filming the carnage -- crowds screamed abuse at them. One American soldier a few feet from me climbed into the seat of his Humvee, threw his helmet on the floor of the vehicle and shouted: "Shit! Shit!" Amid the fury generated among the largely middle-class residents of Mansur -- by ghastly coincidence, the killings were scarcely 40 meters from the houses in which 16 civilians died when the Americans tried to kill Saddam towards the end of the war in April -- whatever political advantages were gained by the killing of Saddam's sons have been squandered. A doctor at the Yarmouk hospital, which received four of the dead, turned on me angrily last night, shouting: "If an American came to my emergency room, maybe I would kill him." Two civilians, both believed to have been driving with their families, were brought to the Yarmouk, one with abdominal wounds and the other with "his brain outside of his head", according to another doctor.¹

As resistance to the American occupation of Iraq grows, scenes like this are becoming increasingly common. Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared the war "over," more than 370 U.S. soldiers have died as well as an estimated 8960 Iraqis since the beginning of the war. The actual number of civilian deaths is unknown given that civilian fatalities are not counted by coalition forces. This brief pamphlet seeks to examine the real motivations behind the occupation of Iraq and argues for the need to build a mass movement to end the occupation.

The United States and Democracy

The Bush administration invaded Iraq under the smokescreen of bringing democracy and freedom to the Iraqi people. Any examination of the history of U.S. interventions worldwide demonstrates that the United States government cares little of the ideas it claims to uphold. There are literally dozens of examples, from Nicaragua to the Philippines, of the U.S. crushing genuine liberation movements and ousting democratically elected governments in their own interests.

For instance, in 1953 the CIA organized a military coup in Iran to overthrow Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadegh. Mossadegh made the mistake of threatening the profits of the Western oil giants by spearheading the movements to nationalize the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company and carry out land reform. The U.S. then backed the brutal dictatorship of the Shah of Iran, until 1979 when he was overthrown during the Iranian Revolution.

In 1973, the CIA helped to orchestrate the overthrow of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende. His crime was that he was a Socialist that honored the constitution and became increasingly popular, which undermined the United States' claims that a socialist could only take power through violence and coercion. "I don't see why we should let a country go Marxist because its people are irresponsible," explained then-Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.² The coup brought to power dictator General Augusto Pinochet—who ruled Chile with an iron fist until 1990. Under his reign, 3,000 Chilean dissidents were executed while thousands more disappeared and tens of thousands were tortured.³

For Additional Information:

...on the History and Consequences of U.S. Interventions:

- William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since WWII* Common Courage, 1995.
- William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* Common Courage, 2000.
- Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire*, Owl Books, 2003.
- Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492 to Present*, Perennial Press; Revised and Updated edition, 2001.

...on Iraq:

- Anthony Armove (editor), *Iraq Under Siege: The Deadly Impact of Sanctions and War*, South End Press; 2nd edition, 2002.

Online Resources:

- Znet, alternative press website, <http://www.zmag.org>
- United for Peace and Justice's <http://www.occupationwatch.org>
- South End Press website, <http://www.southendpress.org>
- Common Courage Press website, <http://www.commoncouragepress.com>
- International Socialist Review, tons of current articles available online, <http://www.isreview.org>
- Reports from British "Independent" newspaper's Robert Fisk <http://www.Robert-Fisk.com>
- New York Times, from the horse's mouth... <http://www.nytimes.com>

Endnotes:

- i. Robert Fisk, U.S. Troops Turn Botched Saddam Raid Into A Massacre, *The Independent*, July 28, 2003.
- ii. Armove, Anthony and Maass, Alan. "Washington's War Crimes." *Socialist Worker*. 16 November 2001. Issue 384, pgs. 6 and 7.
<http://www.socialistworker.org/2001/384/384_06_WashWarCrimes.shtml>
- iii. Blum, William. *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000. pg 130.
- iv. Eric Ruder. "Growing Discontent." *Socialist Worker*. 1 August 2003. Issue 462, pg 5.
<www.socialistworker.org/2003-2/462/462_05_Troops.shtml>
- v. David Cline interviewed by Eric Ruder. "Bring Them Home Now!" *Socialist Worker*. 1 August 2003. Issue 462, pg 5. <www.socialistworker.org/2003-2/462/462_05_ClineInterview.shtml>
- vi. Robert Fisk. "The tyrant is now a prisoner." *The Independent*. 15 December 2003
- vii. "Iraq's Unemployed Rally in Baghdad," *Middle East Online*. 29 July 2003.
<www.occupationwatch.org/article.php?id=317>
- viii. Margolis, Eric. "Iraq's History Written in Blood." *ForeignCorrespondent.com*. 2 August 2002.
<http://www.foreigncorrespondent.com/archive/iraqs_history.html>
- ix. Imperial law and disorder. *Socialist Worker*. 30 May 2003. Issue 455, Pg 8.
<http://www.socialistworker.org/2003-1/455/455_08_BritishEmpire.shtml>
- x. Selfa, Lance. "The 1991 Gulf War: Establishing a New World Order". *International Socialist Review*. Issue 7, Spring 1999. <<http://www.isreview.org/issues/07/1991GulfWar.shtml>>
- xi. Colson, Nicole. "Operation Desert Slaughter." *Socialist Worker*. 12 October 2003. Issue 379, pg 12.
<http://www.socialistworker.org/2001/379/379_12_GulfWar.shtml>
- xii. Quoted in "General: Weapons prediction 'wrong,'" Greg Miller. *Los Angeles Times*. 31 May 2003.
- xiii. William Kristoff, "Save Our Spooks," *New York Times*. Late Edition, Page 27, Section A. 30 May 2003.
- xiv. Robert Fisk, "Iraq Isn't Working," *The Independent*, July 31, 2003,
- xv. Statement on the "Voices in the Wilderness" website. 27 April 2003, http://www.nonviolence.org/vitw/pages/newPages/SBUS_Foreign_Policy_Iraqi_Lives.html.
- xvi. Medea Benjamin. "Baghdad Journal: The Clock is Ticking." *AlterNet*. <www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=16373>

"I FEEL very encouraged overall that conditions here are much better than I thought they were before I came," said Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz during his trip to Iraq in July.

The 150,000 American troops who are killing and dying in Iraq for Bush and Corporate America's oil interests are not nearly so cheerful. Tragically, civilians in Iraq are taking the brunt of the resentment of American troops. However, some soldiers are beginning to realize that they were lied to. "I've got my own 'Most Wanted' list," a sergeant at the Second Battle Combat Team headquarters told an ABC reporter, referring to the deck of cards issued by the U.S. military with the 52 "most wanted" Iraqis. "The aces in my deck are Paul Bremer, Donald Rumsfeld, George Bush and Paul Wolfowitz."

And Bush's "Bring 'em on" taunt to armed Iraqi resistance fighters angered many military families as well as soldiers. "May I just say, Mr. President, perhaps you truly do believe in the invincibility of our military," wrote one soldier's mother named Marcia. "However, the next time you invite attacks on my son, and others, kindly stand in front of our soldiers, rather than hiding behind."^{iv}

From the start of the war to date, over 510 American soldiers have died, the majority of them during the occupation. David Cline, a disabled Vietnam vet with the Veterans for Peace organization explains the lot of the average soldier, many "people are in the military because of what we call the poverty draft. They look at it like, 'If I go into the military, I can get this college program and I'm not going to be stuck working at McDonald's or selling drugs.' That tells you something about our society - where the main way for poor, young people to improve their lives is to go into an armed force, as opposed to a job program or other alternatives. But that's part of America today."^v

Saddam Hussein's Capture

On December 13, 2003, Saddam Hussein was founded hiding in a wretched eight foot hole on a Tigris farm near the village of Ad-Dawr. The Bush administration gloated enthusiastically over the "victory" as they aired video of the once feared dictator with a tongue depressor in his mouth. "Ladies and gentlemen - we got him," proclaimed Paul Bremer. "This is a great day in Iraq's history."

Will Saddam Hussein's capture do anything to improve the conditions of ordinary Iraqis, stabilize the country or end the resistance? The answer is No. In a December 15th article for The Independent, Robert Fisk put it best:

"This bedraggled, pathetic man with his matted, dirty hair, living in a hole in the ground with three guns and cash as his cave-companions - this man was not leading the Iraqi insurgency against the Americans. Indeed, more and more Iraqis were saying before Saddam's capture that the one reason they would not join the resistance to U.S. occupation was the fear that - if the Americans withdrew - Saddam would return to power. Now that fear has been taken away. So the nightmare is over - and the nightmare is about to begin. For both the Iraqis and for us."^{vi}

How Can We End the Occupation!

As long as the U.S. occupies Iraq, the resistance to colonialism and injustice will grow. Right now, the U.S. government is spending nearly one billion per WEEK to occupy Iraq. At the same time, U.S. public schools and universities are facing unprecedented budget cuts. It's time we make the connections. The Campus Anti-War Network is dedicated to building a mass movement to get the U.S. out of Iraq and restore the right of self-determination to the Iraqi people. We send our solidarity to the people there fighting for democracy and justice. In late July 2003, hundreds of unemployed workers marched to Paul Bremer's headquarters in Baghdad with banners that read, "We need work!" A throng of U.S. soldiers confronted the protesters who then began a non-violent sit-in in the street.^{vii} No doubt, many of those American soldiers have friends and family who are unemployed back home. We know the occupation has nothing to do with democracy, it's about oil and empire. It's about making the world safe, and profitable, for Corporate America. Justice is on our side. But just being right doesn't mean much. As escaped slave, turned abolitionist leader Fredrick Douglas put it, "Power concedes nothing without a fight." We've got to organize that fight on every campus in America to End the Occupation!

History of British Occupation of Iraq

Unfortunately, Iraq has a long history of bloody occupation by Western imperial powers. After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the Middle East was divided up among the great empires of France and England. New states were formed by arbitrarily drawing boundaries on a map. All promises of Arab independence the British had made to various local leaders during the First World War were completely abandoned. Britain took the areas that became Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. In forming Iraq, Britain knitted together three regions: Kurdish tribal lands, the Sunni Muslim region around Baghdad, then a small city with a predominantly Jewish and Christian population; and the Shia south.^{viii} This helps to account for the current relationships among Iraq's various religious and ethnic groups.

After only a few years of British occupation, an uprising known as the Great Iraqi Rebellion of 1920 broke out. It was eventually suppressed at the cost of 8,450 Iraqi and another 1,040 British lives. In 1921, the British crowned Prince Faisal as King of Iraq. The nation of Iraq was born but remained under British control until 1932 when Iraq declared its independence. However, the British returned again during the Second World War.^{ix} It is not surprising with this history that Iraqis are suspicious of the United States' motives.

Saddam Hussein and the United States before the Gulf War

Iraq was not always considered a "Rouge State" by the United States. During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) the U.S. as well as the USSR helped fund and supply weapons to both sides of the conflict. When it appeared that Iran was gaining an edge, the U.S. shifted decisively to supporting Iraq. In addition to millions of dollars in aircraft, the U.S. fed intelligence data from its AWACS surveillance planes to the Iraqi high command. But most notably, the U.S. led the largest fleet since the Vietnam War into the Gulf to attack Iran's navy under the cover of "protecting freedom of navigation in the Gulf."

After the end of the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. continued to support Saddam Hussein. It provided arms, technical assistance and economic aid to Iraq. In 1988 and 1989, the U.S. government granted licenses to U.S. firms to sell biological products to the Iraqi Atomic Energy Agency and electronics equipment to Iraqi missile-producing plants. In July 1988, just two months after Saddam used chemical weapons to wipe out the Kurdish village of Halabja, the Bechtel Corporation won a contract to build a petrochemicals plant in Iraq. The first Bush administration doubled agricultural credits to Iraq to \$1 billion a year. The current Bush administration hypocritically cited the gassing of the Kurds as part of its justification for going to war.^x

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Saddam shifted from being one of the United States' closest allies to the new "Hitler," as Bush, Sr. put it. The nature of Saddam's regime did not change, only his usefulness and reliability to the United States aims in the region. This is just one more glaring illustration of the priorities of the U.S. government.

Why the U.S. helped Saddam smash the uprisings in 1991

At the end of the last Gulf War in which the U.S. killed at least 150,000, George Bush Sr. called on the people of Iraq to revolt, encouraging, "the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands, to force Saddam to step aside." Popular uprisings of Kurds and Shiites erupted within days. There were reports of ordinary Iraqis invading Saddam's police headquarters, barracks and prisons. Political prisoners were freed from their cells, and masses of people lynched members of the Saddam regime. The government was near collapse as the revolt spread to 14 of Iraq's 18 provinces.

The Bush administration then reversed its position. As the rebellions were taking place, the U.S. agreed to let the Iraqi military fly helicopters into the no-fly zones that the U.S. had established over southern Iraq. As U.S. planes patrolled nearby, Saddam's generals used helicopters to firebomb small towns and fleeing rebels. U.S. support for the regime was "the most significant factor in the suppression of the uprising," said Ahmed Chalabi, of the Iraqi National Congress.

The White House understood that a democratic uprising would not only limit the United States' access to Iraqi oil but also destabilize the U.S. influence in the region by sending the wrong message to people living under U.S.-allied dictators elsewhere in the Middle East. Washington preferred a

unified Iraq under Saddam to successful rebellions that would have split the country and possibly strengthened Iran.^{xi}

Lies They Told

Given this history, the Bush administration needed to do a lot of creative work in order to sell the conquest of Iraq to a skeptical public. In the aftermath of the tragic attacks on Sept. 11th, Bush cynically whipped up fears about Saddam Hussein's alleged cooperation with al-Qaeda and fabricated "evidence" about Iraq's supposed ready-to-use biological, chemical and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. As Bush said in his pre-war speech, "Intelligence gathered by this and other governments leaves no doubt that the Iraq regime continues to possess and conceal some of the most lethal weapons ever devised."

Anti-war activists argued that these claims were largely fictitious all along, but Bush's lies have been exposed by other sources. Lt. Gen. James Conway, commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force told reporters on May 30, 2003: "It was a surprise to me then—it remains a surprise to me now—that we have not uncovered weapons, as you say, in some of the forward dispersal sites. Again, believe me, it's not for lack of trying. What the regime was intending to do in terms of its use of weapons we thought we understood. We were simply wrong."^{xii}

One Defense Department source told New York Times columnist Nicholas Kristof, "The American people were manipulated. The Al-Qaeda connection and nuclear weapons issue were the only two ways that you could link Iraq to an imminent security threat to the US."^{xiii}

Now, even President Bush has been forced to admit that his "intelligence" about Iraq trying to buy uranium from Niger was unfounded.

Liberation and Democracy or Oil and Empire?

Many Iraqis are happy to see Saddam's regime gone. But that doesn't mean they welcome being turned into a new colony. Soon after the U.S. conquered Baghdad, hundreds of thousands of Shia Muslims participated in a religious procession that had been banned under Saddam. Far from the gratitude that Bush had hoped for, people carried banners reading "No Saddam, No Bush!" and "U.S. get Out of Our Country!" Since then, hundreds of protests have taken place against the U.S. occupiers, often ending in massacres. In a July 2003 article for The Independent, Robert Fisk described some of them:

They protest in the streets, especially against the aggressive American military raids, and they protest in the press. Much good does it do them. When ex-Iraqi soldiers demonstrated outside Bremer's office at the former Presidential Palace, U.S. troops shot two of them dead. When Falujah residents staged a protest as long ago as April, the American military shot 16 dead. Another 11 were later gunned down in Mosul. During two demonstrations against the presence of U.S. troops near the shrine of Imam Hussein at Karbala last weekend, U.S. soldiers shot dead another three. "What a wonderful thing it is to speak your own minds," Lt-Gen Sanchez said of the demonstrations in Iraq last week. Maybe he was exhibiting a black sense of humor.^{xiv}

Some, even those involved in the antiwar movement, have argued that now since the U.S. decimated the country, it should stay to rebuild it. Voices in the Wilderness leaders wrote in April 2003 that:

It will not serve the tremendous human need in Iraq for the U.S. military to immediately withdraw without a legitimate international presence to take its place. From what we've witnessed, this would create a power vacuum that could precipitate the implosion of Iraq's civil society. The U.S. military should be pulled back from its role as a foreign occupation power into a protective role sufficient to allow for Iraq's social and political concerns to be dictated by Iraqi parties.^{xv}

However, when U.N. food aid distribution system fell apart in the turmoil after the invasion, it was the mosques that helped to feed the majority of the Iraqi people—not the U.S. military. Given the United States' history, it is evident that as long as U.S. troops remain, regardless of their role, there is little hope for freedom or democracy for the Iraqi people. The U.S. is further destabilizing the country with the presence of 130,000 jittery, armed-to-the-teeth soldiers, while failing to alleviate the suffering of the people.

Conditions for ordinary Iraqis remain unbearable. According to human rights advocate Medea Benjamin who visited Baghdad in July 2003:

The lack of electricity is an equally pressing concern. The gas pipeline that fed power stations in Baghdad was bombed during the war. The suffocating heat only exacerbates the situation. Without fans or air-conditioning, working and sleeping is misery. Without refrigeration, food goes rancid. Without electricity, water pumps don't work. Without electricity, gas can't be pumped into cars. Without electricity, traffic lights don't work; roads are clogged and utterly chaotic. And without electricity, the streets are dark at night, so thieves roam at will. The other preoccupation was the lack of jobs, with hundreds of thousands of people now out of work. And for the lucky few who have jobs, the salaries are totally inadequate to compensate for the rising prices.^{xvi}

These conditions have improved little over the recent months. Iraqis continue to face harsh living conditions marked by lack of electricity, gasoline shortages, and enormous unemployment. "The Americans have done nothing for us," one Iraqi told the Washington Post. "What's the difference between them and Saddam? We still have looters, killing and unemployment. We can't bear this situation anymore."

Instead of providing food, electricity and medicine, the U.S. has mostly focused on getting oil production up and running. The Bush administration has also handed out lucrative contracts to its corporate pals. Halliburton, which Vice President Dick Cheney headed as CEO until the 2000 elections, got a contract from the Pentagon potentially worth up to seven billion dollars over the next two years. American engineering giant Bechtel Corporation will make hundreds of millions running Iraq's only port with access to the sea. But U.S. corporations aren't just making a killing from the oil industry. Even the American-run health and education ministries are being ordered to spend their tiny budgets on American produced medical instruments and textbooks. As American "Iraqi Governor" Paul Bremer recently told the World Economic Forum, "Remove the barriers [to the Iraqi economy] for entry for new firms, remove the commercial laws that discourage private investment, lift unreasonable restrictions on property rights, develop an open-market trade policy, providing for a level playing field with regional trade partners." In other words, turn Iraq into a fully-owned subsidiary of Corporate America.

Given this reality, it is little wonder that "democracy" is not a high priority for the U.S. In fact, American bureaucrats and businessmen head every governmental ministry in Iraq. In order to dress up this colonial rule, Bremer and the Coalition Provisional Authority (as he likes to call his police state) appointed in July a 25-person "Interim Council" of Iraqis willing to do America's bidding. They have been given a small budget (to buy themselves cars and other symbols of political office), and they have taken up residence in a former "Presidential Palace," but they are fully subordinate to Bremer and the American military authorities. One of their first important decisions was to rotate the "presidency" of the Interim Council by alphabetical order.

The Growing Discontent:

"One weekend a month, my ass."

Sign posted in IS Army Reservist Truck in Iraq.

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- ⁱ Robert Fisk, U.S. Troops Turn Botched Saddam Raid Into A Massacre, *The Independent*, July 28, 2003.
- ⁱⁱ Armove, Anthony and Maass, Alan. "Washington's War Crimes." *Socialist Worker*. 16 November 2001. Issue 384, pgs. 6 and 7. <http://www.socialistworker.org/2001/384/384_06_WashWarCrimes.shtml>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Blum, William. *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower*. Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 2000. pg 130.
- ^{iv} Eric Ruder. "Growing Discontent." *Socialist Worker*. 1 August 2003. Issue 462, pg 5. <www.socialistworker.org/2003-2/462/462_05_Troops.shtml>
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- ^{vi} Robert Fisk. "The tyrant is now a prisoner." *The Independent*. 15 December 2003
- ^{vii} "Iraq's Unemployed Rally in Baghdad," *Middle East Online*. 29 July 2003. <www.occupationwatch.org/article.php?id=317>
- ^{viii} Margolis, Eric. "Iraq's History Written in Blood." *ForeignCorrespondent.com*. 2 August 2002. <http://www.foreigncorrespondent.com/archive/iraqs_history.html>
- ^{ix} Imperial law and disorder. *Socialist Worker*. 30 May 2003. Issue 455, Pg 8. <http://socialistworker.org/2003-1/455/455_08_BritishEmpire.shtml>
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- ^{xi} Colson, Nicole. "Operation Desert Slaughter." *Socialist Worker*. 12 October 2003. Issue 379, pg 12. <http://www.socialistworker.org/2001/379/379_12_GulfWar.shtml>
- ^{xii} Quoted in "General: Weapons prediction 'wrong,'" Greg Miller. Los Angeles Times. 31 May 2003.
- ^{xiii} William Kristoff, "Save Our Spooks," *New York Times*. Late Edition, Page 27, Section A. 30 May 2003.
- ^{xiv} Robert Fisk, "Iraq Isn't Working," *The Independent*, July 31, 2003,
- ^{xv} Statement on the "Voices in the Wilderness" website. 27 April 2003, http://www.nonviolence.org/vitw/pages/newPages/SBUS_Foreign_Policy_Iraqi_Lives.html.
- ^{xvi} Medea Benjamin. "Baghdad Journal: The Clock is Ticking." *AlterNet*. <www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=16373>