



NO MORE INVASIONS, NO MORE WARS

The Occupation of Iraq, Four Years Later

March 19,
2007

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

At least 170 towns, states and cities—including Portland, Corvallis, and Eugene—have passed resolutions calling for the troops to come home. In addition, an ABC News / *Washington Post* poll in late February showed 56% of Americans want the troops home from Iraq, most within a year or less, and 64 percent of Americans now say the war in Iraq was not worth fighting (Reuters, 2/26). An Iraq Centre for Research and Strategic Studies poll from January shows 90% of Iraqis think they were better off before the U.S. invasion (Angus Reid, 1/3).



Congressional Democrats are now working on plans to limit President Bush's ability to continue the war, with some calling for a "fully funded withdrawal" to address concerns that the troops already there won't be stranded without a way to get home safely. A bill proposed by Congressman Earl Blumenauer of the Portland area also calls for the US not to establish permanent military bases, to cede control of Iraq's oil to Iraq, and to fund the reconstruction of Iraq. **Oregon's House will vote March 20 on House Joint Memorial 9 opposing the escalation ("surge") and calling for the troops to come home "as soon as possible."** With over 3200 American troops and tens or hundreds of thousands of Iraqis dead, it is time to change course.

END THE OCCUPATIONS OF IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, THE WEST BANK & GAZA

U.S. presence in Iraq and Afghanistan is seen as the primary cause of bloodshed in those countries. Neither had experienced anti-civilian suicide bombings before the U.S. invasions in 2001 and 2003. Similarly, the phenomenon of Palestinian suicide bombers only began years after Israel, with tacit support from the U.S., invaded and occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. Criticizing Israel's occupation is consistent with U.N. resolutions dating back to #242 in November, 1967. The call to end these three occupations is not calling for either the destruction of the U.S. nor of Israel. Although Israeli troops are no longer in Gaza, the territory is surrounded and, as a result of sanctions imposed by the US after Hamas won a democratic election, there is insufficient food and medicine for the Palestinians. The situation in the West Bank is deteriorating as well, with Israel continuing to build its wall and new settlements despite international rulings calling for them to stop.

As for Afghanistan, "the forgotten war," the last two years were the deadliest years for US troops so far with 99 service members dying in 2005 and 98 in 2006. These numbers are nearly double the annual death tolls of 2004 (58), 2003 (57) and 2002 (68), and the 2006 numbers include five months in which NATO ostensibly took control of military operations from the US. (Casualties including other nations rose from an average of 15 per year to 93 in 2006). While the capital of Kabul is relatively stable, most of the rest of the country has fallen back into the chaotic state in which warlords and a reformed Taliban have control.



REJECT THE "LONG WAR ON TERROR" AND SAY NO TO MILITARY ACTION IN IRAN, SYRIA, NORTH KOREA, SOMALIA, AND ANYWHERE

The US now has several aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf, poised to launch a "pre-emptive" strike against Iran for its alleged nuclear weapons program. Never mind that Iran's nuclear capabilities are designed for generating electricity, a plan put in motion by the US in the 1970s before the revolution that removed the US-friendly Shah from power. There is even talk of Israel launching such an attack, which would require Israeli jets to fly over Arab nations, perhaps even Iraq, to drop bombs in Iran. If the US or Israel continue the policy of pre-emptively attacking other nations, the concept of international law and the UN Security Council will soon become obsolete and the world could descend into global chaos and warfare.

Elsewhere in the Middle East, the US has been threatening Syria. One example was President Bush mentioning Syria and Iran together in his State of the Union address in January as countries who "harbor terrorists," the excuse he used to bombard, invade and occupy Afghanistan in 2001.

Also in January, the US bombed Somalia at least two times, on one occasion missing the alleged "Al Qaeda terrorists" they were trying to assassinate. Seventy nomadic herdsman were killed and 100 wounded in the airstrikes, and none of them were combatants (Oxfam, January 12). *(over)*





North Korea, while still technically part of the “Axis of Evil” President Bush declared in 2002 (also including Iran and Iraq), has fared slightly better, as six-nation talks in February led to an agreement for Korea to end its nuclear program in exchange for international aid.

MONEY FOR EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE, JOBS, HOUSING & THE ENVIRONMENT—NOT WAR

This call to action acknowledges that the roughly \$450 billion spent so far on the war in Iraq could have gone to more productive uses for our country and the planet. In Oregon, \$3.7 billion has gone to the Iraq war that could have paid for 791,185 people with health care or 64,269 elementary school teachers or 3,451,876 homes with renewable electricity (<http://nationalpriorities.org>, click on “tradeoffs”). The total military budget for Fiscal Year 2008 will be \$624 billion, up from about \$300 billion in the year 2000. In 2004, only 31% of Americans felt too much money was spent on the military. In 2007, that number is up to 43% (Gallup/*USA Today* 3/3).

CLOSE THE US PRISON CAMP AT GUANTANAMO BAY AND END THE ASSAULT ON CIVIL LIBERTIES AT HOME

Five years after the US opened its detainment camp in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, roughly 400 people remain incarcerated there, with little access to legal support. In February, “a federal appeals court ruled that foreign-born prisoners seized as potential terrorists and held in Guantanamo Bay may not challenge their detention in U.S. courts” (AP 2/20). Treatment of prisoners allegedly includes exposure to extreme temperatures, sleep deprivation, and other tactics that some might consider torture, but the administration has declared legal.

In one high-profile case, a Canadian citizen, Maher Arar, was detained by the US and sent to Syria, where he was tortured. The Canadian government has apologized and offered \$10.5 million compensation to Mr. Arar, but the US has stubbornly insisted they made no mistake. US Ambassador to Canada David Wilkins said it was presumptuous of the Canadians to tell the United States who should be allowed into its country (*Toronto Star*, 1/26).

In March, the FBI admitted that it over-reached in gathering information on some 52,000 Americans by using “National Security Letters,” which are essentially search warrants issued without judicial oversight. Examples of misconduct included agents claiming that information from telephone companies was urgently needed and that warrants would follow when the agents never applied for warrants (*Washington Post*, March 10).

The continuing deterioration of civil liberties also includes the removal of Habeas Corpus rights (the right to challenge your detention) for “enemy combatants”—and perhaps American citizens—through the Military Commissions Act, and a provision of the National Defense Authorization Act that allows the President to order US troops to deploy within the US borders, stripping a 130-year old prohibition known as the Posse Comitatus act.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Looking at the above list of issues raised at Portland’s March 19th “No More Invasions, No More Wars” event it is easy for a person to become overwhelmed. However, with so many organizations doing work to educate and mobilize people around these various issues (including the 21 groups participating in the event) there are many ways to plug in and get involved. You can start by learning more about the facts and figures included here, sharing them with your friends, family or coworkers, and your elected representatives. If you’re just getting started you may want to start with **letter writing**. If you’re more seasoned you may want to organize a **petition drive** or a **direct action**.

There are dozens of **ongoing actions** around the Portland area, you can join one of them or **start your own**. For a list of some of these actions see our website at <http://www.pjw.info/ongoingactions.html>.

One simple thing you can do is **download and post** a “Bring all the troops home” flyer from our website at <http://www.pjw.info/bringtroopshome.pdf>. Whatever you do, think about challenging yourself to take one more step for peace than what you’ve done before.

A rectangular graphic with a dark background and a white border. The text 'BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!' is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters, arranged in three lines.

For more information please contact the
Peace and Justice Works Iraq Affinity Group

PO Box 42456

Portland, OR 97242

503-236-3065

iraq@pjw.info

Check our website at

<http://www.pjw.info>

for other facts and

past and future event information.

This fact sheet created by the IAG 3/18/07.