



To those
who say

“We can’t
pull out
now!”

Why we can
Why we must

Many people who admit that the Bush Administration’s stated reasons for our country’s pre-emptive war on Iraq were completely without foundation, and who believe the invasion was a mistake, still fear it would be irresponsible for us to simply withdraw our troops now. The following paragraphs explain the flaws in this reasoning and show why near-term withdrawal is the only viable course for the U.S.

“The insurgency will intensify.” *Wrong. The opposite is true.* All competent intelligence confirms that the goal of most Iraqi insurgents is to force an end to the foreign occupation of their country. They are fighting against us and against those who collaborate with us. When we withdraw our combat forces, most insurgents have no further reason to revolt. Most insurgent groups appear willing to negotiate with their own government once we relinquish our control.

“Iraq needs us to guarantee security.” *Wrong again.* Once more, the opposite is true. The Iraqi people are competent and well-educated, and quite capable of recruiting and training reliable security forces without our presence. But many Iraqis see the current army and police recruits as collaborators with the foreign occupation, and therefore as traitors. Many recruits only sign up because they are unemployed and desperate for work, and have little real stomach for the job. Many more recruits are really insurgents who have heavily infiltrated the new police forces. The Iraqi government can recruit, properly train and motivate the security forces it needs to protect Iraqi citizens only after our occupying forces withdraw.

“The terrorists win if we leave.” *On the contrary, the true terrorists win if we stay.* The Bush Administration deliberately lumps all resistance to the U.S. occupation in Iraq into one self-serving category of “terrorists,” but that doesn’t make it so. All competent analysts agree that most of the insurgents oppose the U.S. presence on nationalist and patriotic grounds, not because they are “terrorists.” Only a small minority of the resistance are truly terrorists, the foreign jihadists from radical religious cults like al Qaeda. These foreigners, not ordinary Iraqis, account for most of the suicide bombings of Iraqi civilians, and they are being recruited precisely because “infidel” U.S. forces are there. As long as

we remain, the Iraqi resistance tolerates the *jihadists* as contributing to defeating the common enemy. Once we are gone, they will turn on the *jihadists* if they continue to target Iraqis.

“We made the mess; we should clean it up.” *We made the mess, true, but it is now beyond our power to clean it up.* There is no “happy ending” available. This might not always have been true, but two years of occupation has fueled an insurgency that only grows stronger with time. We now have no choice but to settle for the “least awful” solution, which is to let the Iraqis settle things amongst themselves. Whatever mess remains when we leave will become far worse if we don’t leave, and the longer we don’t leave, the worse the mess will be when we are finally forced to go.

“Iraq needs U.S. troops to reconstruct its infrastructure and revive its economy.” *Just the opposite is true: Reconstruction is prevented by the insurgency.* This has only gotten worse month by month, as the U.S. occupation authorities deliberately strangle the Iraqi economy. With electricity, water, sewage and other services still unmitigated disasters despite two-plus years to fix them, the U.S. military presence cannot restore the infrastructure. And it has been U.S. policy to prostrate the Iraqi economy, keeping the entire formerly State-owned industrial sector shut down until it could be “privatized” to American corporations, and paying tens of billions to foreign (mainly U.S.) contractors using foreign workers for jobs that Iraqis were more than qualified for. Unemployment has soared way above 50 percent, leading many to desperation and fueling the insurgency. Millions of skilled and educated Iraqis who could rebuild the country very quickly once the U.S. leaves, have no jobs today. The only U.S. role should be to fund a large-scale Marshall Plan-type economic program and let Iraqis rebuild their country.

(more on reverse)

“The invasion was justified because it removed a hideous dictator from power.”
Saddam was a hideous dictator, but that had nothing to do with why Bush invaded.

Both Bush’s father and President Reagan supported Saddam Hussein until 1990, even supplying chemicals for weapons against Iran. He was just as much a dictator then as he was in 2003. The Downing Street papers reveal that Bush decided on “regime change” a full year before the invasion. When British Prime Minister Tony Blair then warned that “regime change” would not fly in the court of public opinion as a reason for war, the Bush “echo chamber” began repeating the twin lines that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction and ties to Al Qaeda to justify war. Bush and Cheney latched onto the hollow “Saddam was a dictator” line only when these two lies unraveled a year later, well after the invasion.

The real reason for the Iraq invasion was completely different. Invading Iraq was the cornerstone of a policy of projecting U.S. power into the Middle East promoted by a small group of so-called “neo-cons,” led by Paul Wolfowitz, Dick Cheney, and others in the 1990s. They created the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) in 1997 which called for toppling Hussein, described in a 1998 letter to President Clinton as “a hazard to a significant portion of the world’s supply of oil.” The Bush Administration, under Cheney and Wolfowitz, has been faithfully carrying out the PNAC agenda to a T. Having tried and failed to manipulate the “democratic” process in Iraq as they had hoped, it appears that their fall-back option is to create permanent military bases. These bases will be used to protect the oil in the south of the country, and project U.S. power in the entire region. These new “infidel” bases on sacred Muslim soil will further fan the flames of jihadist hatred and increase the motivation to retaliate with terrorist attacks against the Western world. This plan should be publicly repudiated and the Administration compelled to announce that it will maintain no permanent bases. No American should die to create another foreign U.S. military garrison.

“We are fighting the terrorists in Iraq so we don’t have to fight them here at home.”
Completely false. By fighting in Iraq, we have greatly increased the number of terrorists, their hatred of us, and their combat competence. Nearly 90 percent of would-be suicide bombers caught trying to enter Iraq had no terrorist connections or aspirations before the U.S. invasion, according to Israeli and other sources. Now, inflamed

by our continued presence, their numbers grow daily. Killing or capturing them inspires more to join the anti-U.S. cause. And, ironically, our troops provide far better live-exercise training than the Al Qaeda training camps ever could, greatly improving their skills. A CIA report warns that they are likely to take those enhanced skills back to their home countries, where they could become extremely dangerous to pro-U.S. regimes like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, as well as potentially to the United States and Europe.

“Creating a functioning democracy in Iraq is critical to bringing democracy to the Arab world.” ***On the contrary, the U.S. invasion of Iraq has greatly set back the cause of democracy in the Middle East.*** The Iraq War has hopelessly poisoned most Arabs against the U.S.—almost the entire Islamic world hates us for what we have done to Iraq. Anything we try to do there lacks credibility. The rest of the Arab world trusts nothing that is imported by America, especially a “democracy” that is imposed through invasion. Reform is definitely stirring in many Arab countries, but U.S. support for reformers is a political kiss of death. Democracy is not the reason we are there anyway, and the Arab world knows it. There are many non-democratic countries in the Arab world with whom we are quite cozy, because it suits our economic interests.

“Democracy in Iraq will fail if we leave.” ***Democracy as we know it has already failed in Iraq.*** The Bush Administration assumed it could easily install Chalabi or some equally pro-U.S.-partisan proxy as head of state. They intended to stack the “democratic” legislature to create a US-fortified, pro-Israeli, pro-corporate bastion in the heart of the Arab world. They badly miscalculated, and now appear set to turn the country over to a sham “democracy” largely run by pro-Iranian Shi’ite religious radicals. The U.S. is secretly backing the use of militias, run by radical Shi’ite organizations, which are imposing a Taliban-style theocratic dictatorship across the Shi’ite south of the country where more than 50 percent of the country’s population lives. Unless this is reversed, the U.S. will not be responsible for replacing a dictatorship with a democracy, but for merely replacing a socially and culturally progressive, though cruel, secular dictatorship with an equally cruel Islamist dictatorship intent on sending women back to the Dark Ages. Is this the “democracy” that 2,000 U.S. and 100,000 Iraqi lives have been sacrificed to bring about?

“Wouldn’t leaving mean admitting defeat?” ***We are already defeated.*** The whole world, outside of the U.S., already knows it. The longer we stay, the more defeated we will be. The longer we refuse to admit what everyone knows is true, the more we convince world opinion that the U.S. is far weaker militarily than it wants the world to believe. We lose more credibility every day we refuse to concede that we can’t win. Only by leaving, accepting full responsibility for the multiple horrors we have visited upon Iraq, and making reparations for the damage we did, can we hope to begin to restore our image and good name among the Arab nations, and around the world.

Since leaving is the best thing for the Iraqis, for all of the above reasons, leaving would tell the world that we have finally decided to do what is best for Iraq, not what is best for the U.S. at Iraq’s expense.

**Do the Right Thing.
Withdraw Now.
The Longer We Wait,
the Worse the Disaster.**

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