

Iraq - An End or an Escalation?

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Global Research, August 31, 2010

Rep. Ron Paul, US Congress 30 August 2010

Amid much fanfare last week, the last supposed “combat” troops left Iraq as the administration touted the beginning of the end of the Iraq War and a change in the role of the United States in that country. Considering the continued public frustration with the war effort, and with the growing laundry list of broken promises, this was merely another one of the administration’s operations in political maneuvering and semantics in order to convince an increasingly war-weary public that the Iraq War is at last ending. However, military officials confirm that we are committed to intervention in that country for years to come, and our operations have in fact, changed minimally, if really at all.

After eight long draining years, I have to wonder if our government even understands what it is to end a war anymore. The end of a war, to most people, means all the troops come home, out of harm’s way. It means we stop killing people and getting killed. It means we stop sending troops and armed personnel over and draining our treasury for military operations in that foreign land. But much like the infamous “mission accomplished” moment of the last administration, this “end” of the war also means none of those things.

50,000 US troops remain in Iraq, and they are still receiving combat pay. One soldier was killed in Basra just last Sunday, after the supposed end of combat operations, and the same day 5,000 men and women of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Fort Hood were deployed to Iraq. Their mission will be anything but desk duty. Among other things they will accompany the Iraqi military on dangerous patrols, continue to be involved in the hunt for terrorists, and provide air support for the Iraqi military. They should be receiving combat pay, because they will be serving a combat role!

Of course the number of private contractors – who perform many of the same roles as troops, but for a lot more money – is expected to double. So this is a funny way of ending combat operations in Iraq. We are still meddling in their affairs and we are still putting our men and women in danger, and we are still spending money we don’t have. This looks more like an escalation than a draw-down to me!

The ongoing war in Iraq takes place against a backdrop of economic crisis at home, as fresh numbers indicate that our economic situation is as bad as ever, and getting worse! Our foreign policy is based on an illusion: that we are actually paying for it. What we are doing is borrowing and printing the money to maintain our presence overseas. Americans are seeing the cost of this irresponsible approach as our economic decline continues. Unemployed Americans have been questioning a policy that ships hundreds of billions of dollars overseas while their own communities crumble and their frustration is growing. An end to this type of foreign policy is way overdue.

A return to the traditional American foreign policy of active private engagement and non-interventionism is the only alternative that can restore our moral and fiscal health.

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