

Iraq: Britain to pull out by the end of the year?

By [Global Research](#)

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IRAQI PARTISANS shelled the “Green Zone” in the heart of Baghdad last weekend and an American soldier was killed and 18 others wounded when a truck laden with explosives rammed into the blast walls of a US base in the north of the occupied Arab country. Meanwhile American efforts to get its Iraqi puppets to agree to an open-ended US security agreement are stalling amid rumours that Britain wants to pull-out of Iraq completely by the end of this year.

In London the media is full of reports that Gordon Brown is going to raise the issue of a total British pull-out from southern Iraq when he meets George Bush in London on Sunday. But though the news has clearly been inspired by the Brown government, the Ministry of Defence said that this was simply “speculation” and stressed that no decision is imminent.

Most of Britain’s 4,100 occupation troops are stationed at Basra International Airport which came under partisan rocket attack twice last weekend. Over 30,000 British troops took part in the US-led invasion in 2003 and most of them stayed to occupy southern Iraq as part of US imperialism’s “coalition of the willing” which rapidly collapsed as the resistance got under way. Most of US imperialism’s allies pulled out long ago. Australian troops withdrew last month and Poland will evacuate its remaining forces in Iraq by the middle of October.

Back in Baghdad the puppet regime is still holding out against Washington proposals that would reduce Iraq to the status of an American protectorate. The puppet government, which is increasingly looking towards Iran rather than the United States to guarantee its long-term future, has released details of Washington’s demands which include the control of at least 58 military bases (almost double the number they have now) as well as control of Iraqi airspace up to 30,000 feet. American imperialism is also demanding rights that would effectively allow it to decide if another country is committing aggression against Iraq – a coded threat to Iran.

In Iran last week puppet Iraqi “premier” Nuri al Malaki pledged that “Iraq will not be used as a military launch pad” against Iran. At talks with the Iranian leadership Al Malaki signed up to a very modest defence cooperation agreement with the Islamic Republic which most of the Iraqi Shia community look to for guidance and protection. But Al Malaki is ultimately dependent on US guns and he’s resisting Iranian calls to reject the US plan outright.

Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei made clear his rejection of any Baghdad agreement with the United States. He said “occupiers who interfere in Iraq’s affairs through their military and security might” are the main cause of Iraq’s problems and the “main obstacle in the way of the Iraqi nation’s progress and prosperity”.

He told Al Maliki that Iraqis must “think of a solution to free” the country from the US military, and he vowed that “America’s dream for Iraq will not come true”.

Last week Washington froze tens of billions of dollars in seized Iraqi assets to push through its demands, which also include complete immunity for American soldiers and the thousands of mercenary “contractor” gunmen operating in the country.

The Americans are making demands that would lead to the colonisation of Iraq,” said Sami al-Askari, a senior Shia politician close to Al Maliki who sits on the puppet parliament’s foreign relations committee. “If we can’t reach a fair agreement, many people think we should say, ‘Goodbye, US troops. We don’t need you here anymore’.”

Another prominent Shia MP from the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq called the US proposals “more abominable than the occupation”. Jalal al-Din al-Saghir, said: “Now we are being asked to sign for our own occupation. That is why we have absolutely refused all that we have seen so far.”

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