

Plan Iraq - Permanent Occupation

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Congress is back from its July 4 break and with it more bluster and political posturing on changing course to keep things the same, including everything not working in place. It's the same old scheme, back again, to fool enough of the people all the time and most all of them long enough to move on to the next change of course mission shift starting the whole cycle over again. Even the blind can see the hopelessness of staying the course in Iraq. Aside from its lawlessness and immorality, pushing on with a failed effort qualifies as a classic definition of insanity - continuing the same failed policies, expecting different results.

The only sensible, honorable option is a full, speedy withdrawal along with providing multi-billions for Iraqis to rebuild what we destroyed and have no intention restoring now or ever beyond what's needed for permanent occupation. The only other honorable option is owning up to what no one in Washington or the major media will do - that the Iraq and Afghan conflicts are illegal wars of aggression making those responsible for them in the administration and Congress war criminals warranting prosecution for their crimes.

That won't happen nor will the administration and Congress do anything more substantive than say one thing and do another. It's been an unbroken pattern since 9/11, and especially on Afghanistan and throughout the run-up to the Iraq invasion. Both wars were sold through lies and deceit. They're based on a fictitious "outside enemy" threat without which no "war on terrorism" could exist, and no imperial foreign wars could be waged.

They're possible only by scaring the public enough to believe the threat is still real, and "Enemy Number One" Osama bin Laden (recruited through Pakistan's ISI as a CIA asset in the 1980s) and Al-Queda represent it. So with Saddam gone and no WMDs found, staying the course is vital to the nation's security even when, in fact, the truth is the opposite, crying wolf's wearing thin, and selling snake oil solutions get harder to do. But schemers keep trying with complicit Democrats as much part of the scam as Republicans and Bush loyalists, dwindling down to a precious hard line few but still around in key positions making noise.

With "the walls of Jericho" crumbling around him as the world's most hated man and the ship of state listing badly, a pathetic caricature of a president keeps pleading for more time. He claims it's needed to head off the threat of "mass killing on a horrific scale" in Iraq and plenty at home as well. He then continues using the same timeworn line that the war can be won, the "surge" is working, give it a chance, and withdrawing will be disastrous. Be more patient, and we'll know more in September we're told.

The Iraqi puppet government gets blamed for what's gone wrong with no one in Washington pointing the finger where it belongs. George Bush can do no better than keep asking Congress and the public "to give (generalissimo) David Petraeus a chance to come back

(September 15) and tell us whether his (unworkable) strategy is working, and then we can work together on a way forward (further over the cliff)."

At his July 12 news conference, he never mentioned and attending shameless journalists never pressed him on CIA Director Michael Hayden's earlier bleak assessment of things on the ground. He called the Iraqi puppet government "unable to govern" and its inability to do it "irreversible." Also not discussed was the July UN refugee agency's plea for doubling its Iraq funding to \$123 million for the growing humanitarian needs of an estimated 2000 people fleeing uncontrollable violence in the country daily (60,000 a month) and an estimated four million or more displaced refugees within and outside the country.

No comment or questions were raised either on what journalists Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian (daughter of US political prisoner Sami Al-Arian) reported in the July 30 issue of The Nation. Based on interviews with 50 returning Iraq combat veterans (ranking from privates to captains), they wrote about "disturbing patterns of behavior by American troops" and an indiscriminate use of force (with pictures to prove it) amounting to a "depraved enterprise." Mentioned were accounts of American troops gratuitously killing Iraqi civilians, including children, that these actions are common, go unreported, are rarely investigated, and almost always go unpunished.

George Bush's comments (and most others) ignore as well that over 7 in 10 Americans favor a force withdrawal, over 60% say the war was a mistake, only one in five believe the "surge" improved things, and new polls keep showing the numbers getting worse the longer the conflict continues. It's got the president's approval rating barely above the lowest ever registered since polling began with Richard Nixon, Harry Truman, during the unpopular Korean war, Jimmy Carter, briefly in 1980, and his own father sharing bottom honors.

Maybe George Bush is kept above rock bottom through some creative manipulation of the data or the result of what questions were asked, to whom, the phrasing used, and the order in which they were presented. It seems likely for the most despised, distrusted and disgraced US president ever. Even clever pollsters, however, can't salvage Dick Cheney's rating. At a bottom-scraping 12% reported, it's the lowest number scored for a president or vice-president ever, by far and then some.

The reason is simple. A decisive majority in the country think the war's unwinnable, was a mistake, want it ended, and know it was based on lies. People resent being had. Even through heavily filtered mainstream news reports, they know the situation on the ground is out of control and an appalling US-inflicted crime against humanity atrocity of enormous proportions.

No one in Iraq is safe anywhere, even in the heavily secured, fortress-like Green Zone becoming more like a embattled one daily with regular attacks on it causing damage, injuries and deaths. Few are reported, but one on July 10 was with two to three dozen katyusha rockets and mortar rounds striking inside the world's "ultimate gated community" killing at least three persons and wounding 25 or more. Throughout the country, violence long ago spiraled out of control, and since the "surge" began in February, even the Pentagon admits things are worse, not better, in its quarterly April - June report to Congress.

It contradicts generalissimo Petraeus' claim of "astonishing signs of normalcy" in Baghdad overall and "breathtaking" progress even though he (and others high up) earlier said repeatedly there's no military solution to the conflict. The only thing "breathtaking" about

Petraeus is his inconsistency and that he's either more incompetent than Custer at the "Little Bighorn" or a man who'll say anything to please George Bush. On the ground, in fact, civilian deaths are higher than ever. They number well over 5000 a month known about and countless others never reported, the claimed June numbers notwithstanding that are too low to be believed and should be discounted and ignored as meaningless. In addition, US forces are sustaining more attacks and suffered the highest level of listed fatalities and injuries in the latest three month April – June period since the war began.

Nearly everyone outside the administration and Congress knows the war is lost, but no one's brave enough to admit it or do anything about it. So shifting mission means "damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead" with the dominant media always in tow to shape the facts on the ground to fit the policy. Admiral Farragut would be proud.

Now it's back to the political drawing board with a repackaged new scheme certain to end up little different from the last one. Ideas floating promise a substantial drawdown of troops leaving behind what's claimed is needed to maintain security for the Iraqi people that's killing thousands of them every month. All NATO combined can't contain the hate and growing opposition in both war zones matched against any size occupying force put in place to contain them. Iraq and Afghanistan have a long history of resisting occupiers and a successful record of ousting them in the end. It will be the same this time as earlier after many more lives are lost in a futile effort to prove otherwise.

In Iraq and Afghanistan, the struggle for liberation is on the ground. At home, shifting mission is being concocted by scared politicians up for reelection in 2008. They'll face millions of angry voters fed up with wars they want ended and ready to throw out the bums who won't do it. So it's back to political posturing (again) with Democrats and Republicans trying to convince voters this time they mean it, and what they say is what they'll follow through on. It's the same old repackaged scam in the nation's capitol where nothing can be taken on its face. It's high time the public realized the criminal class there is bipartisan, and nothing short of a new breed of uncorrupted officials will change things. And that won't happen until enough fed up voters elect them.

For now it's business as usual, and summer battle lines have the "intrepid" Democrat-led Congress and a few nervous Republican defectors facing off with the Bush administration on the FY 2008 DOD budget. It calls for an astonishing \$648.8 billion plus an additional \$142 billion war supplemental likely to end up topping \$800 billion when the dust settles and usual pork is added in. Debate will play out the same as last year with Democrats in the end failing to use the one constitutional power Congress alone has – the appropriation authority to cut off funding and end the Bush administration's imperial adventurism once and for all. No money, no wars, that simple.

It's apparently too simple, and all that's likely ahead is more disingenuous posturing over restricting troop deployments and setting an open-ended timetable for an unspecified partial withdrawal at the discretion of the administration taking full advantage to do as it pleases. And if that doesn't work, George Bush promises to veto any legislation setting timelines for withdrawal he'll ignore even if overridden. On July 10, he repeated his earlier statements that Iraq troop levels "will be decided by our commanders on the ground (obeying White House orders), not by political figures in Washington, DC" (except him, Dick Cheney and their hard line cronies.

The president has no more to fear from “opposition” Democrats and “defecting” Republicans than he had before, but he’s quivering anyway. Their posturing (and his) is as phony now as immediately post-9/11 in selling the Afghan war and enacting police state laws. It’s as bad as in pre-March, 2003, last year’s budget debate, and this spring’s agreement to continue funding through September with George Bush certifying (on his word alone) progress is being made and Iraqis are carrying their share of the burden that’s impossible because the world’s only superpower can’t handle its own.

But note Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid’s compromising language with a September 15 administration/Pentagon accountability report upcoming: “The war is headed in a dangerous direction, and Americans are united in the belief that we cannot wait until the administration’s September report before we change course in Iraq.” His next statement shows he’s not preaching pullout but only says “We cannot ask our military to continue to fight without a strategy for success (never mind there is none short of full, unconditional withdrawal), and we certainly cannot ask them to fight before they are ready to do so.”

He’s referring to deployment lengths (unchanged after July 11 Senate amendments were blocked) and concern for a broken military the Pentagon already admits to. The likely outcome of current debate will be the same quick fix as before, save for a few dubious amendments achieving nothing. In the end, the compromise solution will be to kick the can down the road and throw lots more money at the problem hoping it will go away. It’ll only get worse. No amount can salvage a lost war, lawmakers and the Pentagon know it, but solutions like last year and this spring are coming with bloated budgets getting more bloated.

Ignore meaningless party line votes like the one the House passed July 12 for withdrawing most combat troops by April 1, 2008. Not while this administration’s in power, and so far, the Senate’s going nowhere. It can’t get the 60 votes needed to prevent a Republican promised filibuster, and votes cast in both Houses are to deceive voters, not get action. They’re made knowing they’re safe with George Bush promising to veto any change of course and can make it stick.

The wars will thus continue to progress in an endless cycle of more spending with no results beyond growing deficits, intensifying public anger, greater violence on the ground, and defeats getting worse as the conflicts drag on. George Bush calls it “progress. I know we can succeed in Iraq, and I know we must” he said on July 12. Incredibly, he claimed it on eight trivial military benchmarks under US control, blaming eight more important political failures on the Iraqi puppet government in charge of little more than cleaning daily rubble and dead bodies off streets. He added results to date are a mixed bag and overall it’s too early to pass judgment – after over four disastrous years of failure and a conflict longer in duration than WW II when war raged on three continents against formidable enemies, and it was no simple task beating them.

It again proves this man is unchallenged as a world champion serial liar. By now, he may believe some of his own lies the way writer Alex Cockburn said Ronald Reagan believed his. “Truth (for the great fabricator) was what he happened to be saying at the time. He (and Bush) went one better than George Washington in that he couldn’t tell a lie and he couldn’t tell the truth, since he couldn’t tell the difference between the two.”

There is a difference, however, between the two deceivers. During his first term at least, Reagan (as a former actor, albeit a B-rated one) did a reasonable job impersonating a

president. He could find his “mark” and read his lines. George Bush never rose to that level even as Texas governor or any other time in his life, and when it comes to lying, he can’t stop doing it even when he knows the difference. He proved it July 12 in his ludicrous portrayal of the true state of things in Iraq. It’s part of his desperate effort for new congressional funding in even greater amounts. To get it, he ignores growing public disenchantment and deep revulsion about a criminal lost cause enterprise launched and continued on the basis of lies.

That notwithstanding, Reid and other Democrats have their grandiose notions of mission shift. It’s to avoid “a precipitous withdrawal from Iraq” with legislation he’ll propose calling for permanent occupation forces on the ground for the spurious notion of “conduct(ing) counterterrorism operations, protect(ing) our assets (meaning oil) and train(ing) Iraqi forces.” Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, Carl Levin is on board with him. He’ll support a limited troop withdrawal by late year, an end to combat operations on the ground by April 30, 2008 with Iraqi forces taking over, and a large remaining permanent occupation force hunkered down inside fortified super-bases. Never mind what Iraqis want that excludes our presence in their country. And the same is true for the Afghans.

Voices from the administration, Pentagon, Congress and the dominant media assure they’ll be disappointed as the top goal is salvaging America’s imperial adventurism and mission shifting current operations into a workable permanent occupation. Here’s why. The Afghan and Iraq wars are for resources, primarily oil, and in the parts of the world where more than four-fifths of proved reserves are located. Canadian journalist and author Linda McQuaig explains the grandest of grand prizes is “hidden in plain sight” in Iraq. It’s the country’s oil treasure – the planet’s last remaining bonanza of easily harvested “low-hanging fruit” with more potential reserves than Saudi Arabia, the great majority of them untapped.

It makes the country “the most sought after real estate on the face of the earth” according to one Wall Street oil analyst she quoted. Even with dated information on its potential, it’s known Iraq has at least 10% of dwindling world reserves. But it’s potential was “frozen in time” with no new development in over two decades because of intervening wars in the 1980s, economic sanctions following the Gulf war in 1991, and the current war ongoing since March, 2003. If the country’s potential doubles or triples, as Saudi Arabia’s did in the last 20 years, it would, in fact, have the world’s largest (mostly untapped) proved reserves making Iraq too rich a prize for America and its Big Oil allies to pass up. It’s worth trillions of dollars and immense geopolitical power at a time of peak oil in the face of future dwindling supplies, except in this resource-rich country the US won’t ever leave as long as there’s enough of them in the ground and region to justify staying.

It’s why the country is being turned into a giant permanent military base protecting the ocean of oil beneath it Washington intends to control for its Big Oil friends and to have veto power over who gets it, who doesn’t, and at what price. To understand what’s happening, consider Korea. The US arrived in the country in 1950 following Harry Truman’s committing American forces to help the South after Washington’s instigated civil war began there on June 25 that year. Fifty-seven years later, around 37,000 troops still remain with no intention to leave. Washington has the same thing in mind for Iraq. The Pentagon set up shop there and intends to stay.

Below is shown, as best we know, how far advanced we’ve come toward militarizing the country for permanent occupation no matter how debate plays out in Congress. It’s all bluster providing cover for administration policy both parties support.

Plan Iraq – Permanent Occupation

Drawdowns, withdrawal, timelines, mission shifting, building democracy and all the other current and long-standing phony rhetoric aside, America is in Iraq to stay as a conqueror and occupier – that is, until Iraqis finally kick us out as they will in time in a part of the world long a graveyard for foreign invaders. But it won't happen quickly or before countless more thousands die, are injured, suffer immeasurably, are displaced, and lose everything. This is the ugly dark side of imperialism, nurtured on conquest, unchallengeable control, and keenly focused on destroying and permanently occupying the cradle of civilization now smashed and planned for dismemberment.

In the meantime, a new “peace candidate” will become president in January, 2009 on the strength of distant echos of Richard Nixon’s “peace with honor” 1968 campaign and hopes history would call him a “peacemaker.” Instead, there were five and one-half more years of intense war, thousands more American deaths, and one to two million more Southeast Asian victims in Vietnam and the secret wars in Cambodia and Laos.

Whatever little, if anything, a new president does at home, the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan will remain with plans for Iraqi forces eventually to do most of our killing and dying for us. If or when they're up to it, the scheme involves US troops staying hunkered down inside their super-bases, used as needed outside them, with massive air power deployed freely to slaughter innocent victims on the ground whenever they resist what no one should ever have to endure. For now, Iraqis have no choice but to bear up and fight back because it's their misfortune to have an ocean of “our” oil beneath their sand we laid claim to.

Already discussed is Iraq's importance as the planet's last remaining “low-hanging fruit” bonanza of mostly untapped oil riches worth trillions of dollars as the key reason America came to stay. The US military arrived in March, 2003 and dug in for the long haul with fixed military installations around the country. Dick Cheney's former employer, Halliburton, got most of the huge no-bid contracts, worth many billions, to war-profiteer and build them, irrespective of its outlandish record of waste, fraud and abuse.

As of May, 2005, US forces were operating out of 106 bases around the country from an original estimated 120 sites. They range in size from the huge Main Operating Base (MOB) Camp Victory complex near Baghdad airport where thousands of American troops are stationed to smaller ones known as Forward Operation Sites (FOS) that are still major installations. In addition, there are many Cooperative Security Locations (CSL) that are small outposts for as few as 500 personnel, a number of prisons and detention facilities, and an original dozen sites given to Iraqi military or police units that now likely number many more.

Reports vary, and much remains secret, about the administration and Pentagon's current and future construction plans for Iraq. What is known is \$18 billion earlier was allocated for in-country work that includes base installations, the US Embassy and whatever other occupation facilities are intended. The current figure is likely much higher. It's also known US engineers are focusing on building 14 large “enduring bases” for extended encampments for the tens of thousands of US forces there now and future replacements.

Professor Emeritus Jules Dufour of the University of Quebec, Canada discussed “The Worldwide Network of US Military Bases” in his July 1, 2007 article posted on Global Research.ca. It included detailed information plus maps and much more on what he called

“the Worldwide development of US military power (in place) to view the (entire) Earth surface as a vast territory to conquer, occupy and exploit (for giant US corporate behemoths it’s in league with).” He characterizes the scheme as a process of “Humanity....being controlled and enslaved by this Network of US military bases.” He and Chalmers Johnson believe they number 1000 or more that, according to Johnson, were in 153 countries as of September, 2001 and now likely in 160 or more. There are also many other secret, espionage, and other bases jointly used in many countries with their hosts.

Dufour says post-9/11, the US built 14 new bases in the Persian Gulf region. It’s also involved “in construction and/or reinforcement of 20 bases (106 structured units as a whole) in Iraq” plus others in Afghanistan and other Central Asian former Soviet bloc countries and elsewhere to encircle and control both regions’ strategic resources, mainly oil, and the pipeline routes needed to transport it.

Iraq bases are located or are being built around Baghdad, Mosul, Taji, Balad, Kirkuk, Nasiriyah, Tikrit, Fallujah and Irbil. There are also plans to rebuild and improve Baghdad, Mosul and other airfields as well as rebuild roads and other essential infrastructure strategically needed for occupation. There are no plans to help the Iraqi people left on their own. They have the barest of essential services, and infrastructure to provide them, like functioning hospitals, medications, electricity, clean water, safe food to eat, fuel, schools, and most everything else.

Most important for the planned long haul will be four to six or more super-sized bases on the order of small towns with their own neighborhoods and kinds of amenities found in typical US ones. Inside them, it’s hard distinguishing between Iraq and America unless more sophisticated and better aimed rocket and mortar rounds strike nearby that’s becoming more common.

The biggest of these bases so far is the huge Balad one. It houses the major Air Force operation in the country, including its new spacious, state of the art, “Kingpin” air traffic control center dividing the country’s airspace into “kill boxes,” called the Common Grid Reference System. The largest Army logistical support center is here as well, and it’s also where thousands of civilian contractors, in neighborhoods known as “KBR-land,” are based with all the comforts of home for them and military personnel when it’s quiet inside. The so-called secret Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF) is also at Balad. It’s kept behind “especially high walls” for privacy and seclusive separation from other operations based there.

The al-Asad airbase is the largest marine encampment in the country located in western Anbar province where resistance to US occupying forces has been stiffest. It, too, has a hometown feel with similar amenities to the country’s other major bases intended to be permanent. While the Pentagon won’t admit it, four super-bases were operating last year with plans likely for at least two more. In addition, it was planned, but now not certain, that British forces would maintain a permanent military presence in the south around Basra where it’s now based. If Britain pulls out, as its public demands, the Pentagon will move in and likely expand the facilities with at least another super-sized one for that strategically oil-rich part of the country. They’ll need it as the Brits are no more in control there than US forces anywhere else. Their 2006 Operation Sinbad flopped with militias on the ground in full control.

Nonetheless, America came to Iraq to stay as long as the Middle East is resource-rich and

the greatest untapped portion by far is in Iraq. But history shows the best-laid plans don't always work out as intended. Occupiers aren't welcome anywhere with Iraq and Afghanistan particularly adept at expelling earlier ones that tried and failed, including the British from both countries who should know better. Journalist Felicity Arbuthnot notes on Global Research.ca July 14 that on this day in 1958, "the Iraqi army toppled the British (post WW I-imposed) royal regime, which had opened the door wide for Western monopolies to plunder the country's oil wealth under unjust concession." Her message to modern-day plunderers: "Listen to history."

Permanency may only be in the eyes of the beholder and may end much sooner than planned. Our super-bases, with all their size, security and comforts of home, may become no more permanent than their mega-predecessors in Danang, Cam Rahn Bay and the Saigon embassy (a miniature compared to the Vatican-sized behemoth in Baghdad's Green Zone) where the last remnants of US presence in Vietnam were helicoptered from its rooftop in defeat and humiliation. It forced us to give up what we intended keeping unchallenged with visions as conquerors no different than today.

In the end, we abandoned them because we were beaten and had no other choice. What a determined third-world Asian country did 30 years ago to the world's strongest superpower, Middle East and Central Asian ones are doing today to the only remaining one slipping fast and running out of excuses why.

It's just a matter of time before history repeats with the same result. Iraqis and Afghans believe it and intend to prove it again. Too bad Washington hard-liners know little history and haven't figured it out. One day they will. They're just slow to catch on. Ruling empires never see the tide turning and that they're swimming against it. George Bush's America is no different. It bit off more than it can swallow and will end the same as others wrecked on the shoals of their own hubris.

The scene is playing out in the graveyard of other imperial powers in the Middle East and Central Asia. It just remains for the final chapter to be written ending rest in peace unless Americans locate their cajones and write their own version first. It has to reject corrupted power politics; remove the criminal class; restore the rule of law; place the rights of humanity and democratic values above wealth and privilege; and end forever the hellish wars fought for them.

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