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The Illegitimate and Disastrous U.S. Military Occupation of Iraq

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> "The president [George W. Bush] is strongly motivated to string out the [Iraq] war until he leaves office, in order to avoid taking responsibility for the defeat he has caused and persisted in making greater each year for more than three years."General William Odom, former head of the National Security Agency (NSA) under President Ronald Reagan

> "In beloved Iraq, blood is flowing between brothers, in the shadow of an illegitimate foreign occupation, and abhorrent sectarianism threatens a civil war." King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, March 29, 2007

> "After [this] war [against Iraq] has ended, the United States will have to rebuild much more than the country of Iraq. We will have to rebuild America's image around the globe." Sen. Robert Byrd, (D-W.Va), March 19, 2003

The Iraqi Parliament is on record as being against the US-led military occupation of their country. Moreover, most Iraqis resent Americans occupying their country and the Bush-Cheney administration's requests to do it forever by maintaining nearly 60 military bases in their country. The Bush-Cheney administration has even threatened the puppet Iraqi government to withhold some $50 billion of Iraq's money held as reserves at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, if the Iraqi government does not sign what is also called a "strategic alliance" agreement to prolong U.S. occupation indefinitely and turn Iraq into a permanent American colony.

Indeed, after the illegal military invasion of Iraq in March 2003, the United Nations was forced to extend a mandate of occupation to the United States. Thus, in June 2004, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 1546 that recognized the *de facto* occupation of Iraq by American-led military forces and kept Iraq subject to the Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, which authorizes the use of force in Iraq. The mandate was supposed to be terminated at the end of 2005, but was extended. It is that U.N. mandate authorizing an American presence in Iraq that finally expires on December 31 of this year. After that date, there will be no legal basis for U.S. military forces to be on Iraqi soil and the Iraqi government would regain its entire authority.

That's what the Bush-Cheney administration wants to avoid by pressing the Iraqis to sign a so-called long-term "security agreement", which would not require approval by the U.S. Congress (because it would not be a treaty, although this is playing with words in order to

escape the scrutiny of U.S. lawmakers), and which would keep real Iraqi authority to a nominal level and concentrate most of political power in American hands. In other words, the Bush-Cheney administration wants a puppet government in Baghdad in perpetuity. We may add that this is precisely what Republican presidential Candidate McCain also wants.

In the future, as now, Americans in Iraq (American troops, contractors and private security guards) would have full legal immunity for their actions, even when they steal, rape, kidnap, torture, or murder Iraqis, and could arrest Iraqis and put them in American-run jails. Moreover, the American occupiers would have key Iraqi departments such as Defense, Interior and National Security ministries, as well as armament contracts, under their supervision for ten years, would keep control of Iraqi airspace, would maintain permanent military bases in the country and would retain the right to strike, from within Iraqi territory, any country (read Iran and Syria) they consider to be a threat to their security or contrary to U.S. or Iraqi interests. Some sovereignty and some independence indeed! Even the weak Nouri al-Maliki government thinks it's too much, while Shia Grand Ayatollah al-Sistani is tinkering with the idea of issuing a religious fatwa against the Bush-Cheney's so-called proposed agreement, a move that would likely kill it.

Let's keep in mind that the Bush-Cheney's military occupation of Iraq is doubly illegitimate, besides having been illegal from day one according to international law. First, a solid majority of Americans want American soldiers out of Iraq. Second, a vast majority of Iraqis also want American soldiers out of their country. The irony is that the Bush-Cheney regime pretends to be in Iraq for the sake of "democracy", while they trample on people's demands both in Iraq and in the United States. Some "democracy" indeed. How about fascism and imperialism!

When both the president of Iraq and the King of Saudi Arabia say that the ongoing U.S. military occupation of Iraq is 'illegitimate', and when Turkey has acted on its threats to bomb and invade Northern Iraq, it becomes obvious that the entire Middle East is now turning against the U.S. Bush-Cheney regime and its colonial adventure in that part of the world. The Bush-Cheney regime likes to delude itself and to play on words when it pretends that Iraq is not under an "illegitimate foreign occupation" but that U.S. troops are in that far away country at Iraq's invitation (sic!), citing the after-the-fact U.N. mandate. This is an example of fuzzy and circular thinking. When you don't think straight, you don't act straight. And, on this score, the Bush-Cheney administration is the most crooked you can find.

All that remains to see is whether the Bush-Cheney administration will succeed on three fronts, that is to say,

1- force its puppet government in Baghdad to sign a long-term agreement of dependence toward the United States,

2- bypass Congress and the U.S. Constitution in adopting what would clearly be an international treaty, and finally,

3- tie up the hands of the next president and prevent him from withdrawing U.S. forces from Iraq.

When you think of it, this is a cynical game of brinksmanship, always on the edge of legality, morality and decency.

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