

Troop Movements Are not a 'Withdrawal'

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Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) today made the following statement regarding the announcement that U.S. troops have left the cities and towns of Iraq and turned over formal security to Iraqi security forces.

"The withdrawal of some U.S. combat troops from Iraq's cities is welcome and long overdue news. However, it is important to remember that this is not the same as a withdrawal of U.S. troops and contractors from Iraq.

"U.S. troop combat missions throughout Iraq are not scheduled to end until more than a year from now in August of 2010. In addition, U.S. troops are not scheduled for a complete withdrawal for another two and a half years on December 31, 2011. Rather, U.S. troops are leaving Iraqi cities for military bases in Iraq. They are still in Iraq, and they can be summoned back at any time.

"This is not a great victory for peace. On May 19, the Christian Science Monitor reported that Iraqi and U.S. military officials virtually redrew the city limits of Baghdad in order to consider the Army's Forward Operating Base Falcon as outside the city, despite every map of Baghdad clearly showing it within city limits. In fact, according to Section 24.3 of the "SOFA" U.S. troops can remain at any agreed upon facility. The reported reason for this decision is to ensure U.S. troops are able to 'help maintain security in south Baghdad along what were the fault lines in the sectarian war.'

"This troop movement should not be confused with a troop withdrawal from Iraq. In reality, this is a small step toward Iraqi sovereignty as Iraqi security forces begin assuming greater control over security operations, but it is a long way from independence and a withdrawal of the U.S. military presence."

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