
MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT THE SITUATION IN IRAQ: WHY WE ARE STILL MARCHING

HASN'T CANADA DECIDED NOT TO GO TO IRAQ?

Yes; but Canada must stay out of Iraq, and until the US and UK withdraw, the occupation will continue. Further, Canada is supporting the war through the back door – both by sending advisors, and by its arms manufacturers providing huge numbers of munitions and other equipment. Now, Canada is sending Michael Bell, a former Canadian diplomat, to oversee the involvement of Canadian businesses wishing to “rebuild” Iraq – while simultaneously lending a veneer of legitimacy to the occupation. And even though Canada did not officially participate in the invasion, Prime Minister Paul Martin has decided to send troops to Jordan to train Iraqi police. Only a broad and diverse mass movement could force the Canadian government to not participate in George Bush's war, and only a broad and diverse mass movement can ensure the occupation, and Canadian complicity, ends as soon as possible.

SHOULDN'T WE BE FOCUSING ON OTHER ISSUES NOW THAT THE IRAQIS HAVE HAD AN ELECTION?

Iraq is still the main issue for the antiwar movement. That is because the Iraq war remains the key global issue, and Canada's stance in it matters.

The war on Iraq is part of a US-led so-called “pre-emptive war, pre-emptive detention” policy in which Canada is complicit. Not only has Canada done all it can to support the “war on Terrorism” in Afghanistan, and to bolster US efforts in Haiti, it is also racially profiling and detaining Muslims without charge through the Security Certificate process.

There are pressures we can put on the US regime from here; our goal is to make the occupation as difficult as possible for the US to continue, while simultaneously pressuring our own government to end its complicity. Bush wants international help, i.e. troops; we must ensure Canada does not provide them. We also need to keep up the pressure on Canadian corporations that make a profit from war, and to keep a spotlight on the human rights crisis in Haiti which our government has helped a great deal to initiate and worsen. The more pressure we put on our own government and indirectly on the US regime, the harder it will be for them to attack other countries.

WHAT ABOUT THE IRAQ “ELECTION”?

The Iraq election may have been a boost to the public relations campaign of the Bush administration, but the violence of the occupation continues. It was up to Iraqis to decide for themselves whether or not to participate in the election; many used it as a way of sending a message against the occupation. Shias voted largely for a party that has promised to end the occupation. Sunnis boycotted the election to apply pressure to the same end. All major political parties had as a plank in their campaigns an end to US/UK rule in the country. Iraqis voted overwhelmingly for the troops to go. But the US has no intention of leaving Iraq. The conflict will continue. Since the election, Bush has clarified once more that he has no intention of setting a timetable for withdrawal, despite the fact that all of the parties who ran demanded a withdrawal timetable as part of their platform.

BUT WOULDN'T WITHDRAWAL START A CIVIL WAR AMONG IRAQIS?

The resistance in Iraq is as diverse as our own peace movement. The only “ethnic violence” that occurs has been stirred up by the foreign occupying armies; Sunnis and Shias have no history of hurting each other, and there is no reason to expect them to start doing so now.

HASN'T THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ DIED DOWN, WITH ONLY A FEW INCIDENTS OF ETHNIC VIOLENCE OCCURRING?

Conditions in Iraq are worsening. The utter devastation of Fallujah and untold destruction of human life continues. Depleted uranium has already had almost 15 years of effects on Iraqis since the first gulf war, and was used again by US forces in this conflict.

Rising casualties among US troops means that morale is sinking. The US antiwar movement is working on organizing GIs and their families; here in Canada we need to work to support the war resisters, of which there are 7 known, former American military who have refused to fight an illegal and immoral war and who have applied for refugee status in Canada.

To stop this agenda we need more of the unity shown over the past few years. We need to mobilize together for peace and justice. Join us!

www.nowar-paix.ca (Ottawa)

www.acp-cpa.ca

www.stopwar.org.uk/march20

www.echecalaguerre.org

www.rocg.ca (Gatineau)

www.unitedforpeace.org

www.internationalanswer.org

www.mfso.org

March 19-20, 2005:

The world still says no to war!

On the 2nd anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, people from all over the world are gathering to denounce war. This mobilization builds on the magnificent global demonstrations of February 15th 2003 and March 20th 2004, which saw many millions of people marching in more than 600 cities worldwide. Over 500 events are planned in the US alone, and over 50 cities worldwide are participating. In Canada there will be over 40 actions from coast to coast. Here are excerpts from some calls to action from around the world:

World Social Forum, Call from social movements, Porto Alegre, January 31st 2005: We demand the end of the Iraq occupation... We will strengthen our campaigns against transnationals committed with the invasion, we support soldiers who oppose to participate in the war and we defend activists that have been persecuted for being against the war.

Military Families Speak Out, USA: The US government continues to deploy soldiers stationed at nearby Ft. Bragg to fight and die in a country that doesn't threaten our security and probably never did... The appeal of the empty slogans and the yellow ribbon magnets of the right-wing pro-war zealots faded long ago. In 2005, real support for the troops means Bring Them Home Now!

Collectif Échec à la guerre, Quebec: ...this message will also be meant for all the political and economic leaders who are trying to follow the same agenda right here, in Quebec and Canada: No to foreign occupation and domination... for people's right to self-determination; no to militarism and ballistic missile "defence"... for increased funding of social programs; no to racist and islamophobic fear campaigns... for the abolition of security certificates.

Hyderabad, India declaration: This Assembly calls upon the global resistance to enlarge the scope of the current struggle, particularly in the countries that are a part of the US coalition of occupation, not only to protest but also to shut down the US war machine.

Canadian Peace Alliance: Canadian corporations are complicit in the brutal occupation of Iraq, selling the very bullets being used to enforce the occupation. The government of Canada is continuing with its support for the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan... War resisters are still fighting at the immigration and refugee boards for status in Canada. And racist attacks, detention and deportation specifically against people of Muslim and Arab backgrounds are still all too frequent.

TROOPS OUT NOW!

END THE OCCUPATION! STOP SELLING IRAQ! No CANADIAN COMPLICITY!

