

Open letter to the anti-war movement

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The national popular resistance in Iraq, in defending the whole of humanity against a culture of force, deserves our recognition and support, writes Hana Abdul Ilah Al-Bayaty

The illegal invasion and destruction of Iraq is not only the biggest crime of recent history, it is the original sin of the 21st century, a depravity. In its war on Iraq, the United States has sought to destroy Iraq as both a state and a nation.

It has decimated an entire class — the progressive middle class of Iraq that had proven its capacity to manage Iraqi resources independently and to the benefit of all; it killed nearly a million while sending millions more into exile; it orchestrated death squads and looting and invented new horrors in torture and rape; in the name of bringing democracy, it brought material destruction on a mass scale to a people, aiming also to erase their identity, memory, culture, social fabric, institutions and forms of administration, commerce, and everyday life; it even attacked Iraq's unborn generations with the 4.7 billion-year death of depleted uranium.

It has engaged in civilisational genocide as well as its own moral suicide. Force, however, does not dictate right. The brutality of power and imperialism has been definitively exposed while the project for a new American century has utterly failed. The consequences for American and international history are conclusive. The world order that formed around erstwhile US liberal values has evaporated.

The US invasion and occupation of Iraq is a military, economic, political, moral and cultural disaster for Americans and the world.

US military failure has been demonstrated by the inability of the best funded and most sophisticated armed force in the world to defeat the resistance of a small country and its poor people tired of 13 years of sanctions, exposing war as useless.

While the Americans may attempt to secure their presence in Iraq, they cannot destroy the belief of Iraqis that they have the right to live as any other people in the world, free and independent and sovereign in their land and over their resources.

Occupying Iraq is an economic disaster because the costs of the war for the United States have increased beyond any economic gain it could have from controlling Iraqi oil.

Politically, the occupation is a disaster for the United States because no one in the world can argue that it is playing a progressive role. The occupation is also a moral and cultural disaster for the US. Following the enormous human suffering of World War II, the world — Americans included — established international law and human rights law that set the

standard for civilised societies.

US neoconservatives and imperialists are trying to destroy this civilisation, refusing to be subject to international law and replacing it with the law of the jungle. How can the world — Americans included — be identified with such a savage enterprise as the war on and occupation of Iraq?

Arabs are not strangers to neo-imperial attempts to prevent their development. They recall the systematic demonisation of their popular movements: the attempted toppling of the democratically elected Syrian government in 1956 for being “communist”, the characterisation of Nasser as a “fascist” when he nationalised the Suez Canal, the criminalisation of the Iraqi Baath Party, referred to as “Nazis”, when it refused to surrender control over Iraq’s resources. Even the Palestinian and Lebanese people who heroically struggle against occupation are considered “terrorists”. We know well what are colonial policies in general and in this region in particular. The US always pretends to defend the rights of a minority — whether its demands are justified or not — in order to control the majority. In Iraq, since 1991, the US appealed to Kurds and Shias to rebel, trying to insinuate that those who govern them are Sunnis. Anyone with intellectual honesty knows that the Baath Party was neither sectarian in its thinking nor in its membership.

US-Israeli plans, based on creating divisions among Arabs in one country, or between countries, have failed. In Iraq, the policy of charming some groups of the Iraqi Resistance or their supporters in order to divide them and isolate the resistance has failed completely.

Despite repeated declarations made by war criminal Jalal Talabani, resistance groups are united in their position. Second, the policy of dividing Iraqi movements into Shia, Sunni and Kurd, is disintegrating: large movements of opinion insist on the unity of Iraq and the common interest of its people. Ever more groups in the south enter the struggle against the occupation and its local puppet government.

The unity of Turkomen, Assyrians and Arabs on the fate of Kirkuk is an example of underlying unity, as is the deepening of tribal solidarity, spreading demands for a large political national front, demonstrations in the north, and ever unifying positions concerning the future of Iraq’s oil wealth.

Iraq has been a socio-economic and geopolitical entity for more than 4000 years, it cannot be divided. It is the cradle of several civilisations. When united this entity has proven able to enhance human civilisation and be an engine for progress.

Where the Sumerians invented writing, the Babylonians invented law, followed by the Abbasid who introduced the idea of a state of all its citizens and of social solidarity in society, opening the path for the unifying Arab-Muslim civilisation that survives proudly to this day. The Iraqi people are the expression of this heritage, regardless of their religion or ethnicity. Never in history could two states cohabitate the area that is now Iraq. It has always been in the interest of the peoples who settled in the Iraq basin to organise together a common geopolitical future.

There have been many unsuccessful imperial attempts to divide this natural entity. No form of aggression, regardless of how criminal or vengeful, can destroy the Arab-Muslim identity of Iraq or Iraq’s geopolitical unity. In its attempts to destroy this civilisation and reality, the US administration has thrown the entire idea of the so-called West into disarray. Definitively

exposed are all the racist and condescending attitudes that had remained latent or covert. The “West” — and the United States in particular — stands naked as a culture of force. The moral accounting, which will develop inexorably, will change world history. It is the resistance of the Iraqi people that demands it.

Attempts to choke Arab development cannot but fail. The three main socio-economic and political currents developed by Arab societies — nationalists, Islamists and leftists — are intrinsically anti-imperialist and therefore opposed to US-Israeli regional designs.

For nationalists, retaining control of national resources to serve the general interest is sacrosanct. For leftists, opposing the international chains of imperialism and globalisation is a baseline. For Islamists, resistance to foreign occupation, as written in the Quran, is a duty. Their interest lies currently in achieving unity in struggle. They are united by their Arabo-Muslim identity. They share common principles and values as follows: natural resources, material heritage, and the riches of culture and civilisation are the property of the totality of the people; the totality of citizens constitutes the people; the people are the sole source of sovereignty and of constitutional, political and judicial legitimacy; government is responsible for and accountable to all citizens; solidarity between citizens — between generations, the able and ill, the elderly and young, the orphan and every human being who finds himself in a state of weakness — should form the basis of any government’s social policy.

The general interest is the justification and basis for the operation of the state, with every citizen, free of all forms of discrimination, sharing in the fruits of national wealth and social development.

The United States established a collision course confrontation with Iraqi society when it liquidated the Iraqi state, destroying its accomplishments and erasing its memory. It was oblivious to the simple truth that society is not a political movement or head of state that can be conquered, apprehended, bribed or killed; rather, it is all the living people in a given country.

Like other live societies, Iraqi society possesses huge capabilities — a sophisticated legacy based on ancient civilisations and an experienced patriotic movement. Occupation forces faced from the first day a resolute resistance, culminating in an uprising by all Iraqi movements and organisations, including those defending women or unemployed youth, human rights organisations, trade unions, professional syndicates, agencies defending Iraq’s environment and the rights of prisoners, and all other cultural and political organisations, side-by-side with provincial and tribal communities and peaceful and armed resistance groups. A national popular movement, opposed to occupation and sectarianism, developed taking various forms, from civil to armed resistance.

In struggling against military-imperial powers, Iraqis fight in defence of values around which a majority in the world gathers in consensus.

In contrast, the sheer level of force to which Iraqis have been subjected by imperial powers — from systematic murder and rape, the desecration of religious and cultural sites and the destruction of Iraq’s historic heritage, the poisoning of Iraq’s landscape and rivers by radioactive weapons that will mark the lives of its future generations for hundreds if not thousands of years, the terrorising of a whole national population and its attempted division along lines leading to all out civil war, the plunder of its resources — prove the decadence and utter immorality of the neoliberal/neoconservative agenda.

The struggle of Iraq is a struggle for civilisation, for culture, for justice, and for not reducing human life to mere production and consumption or the conquest of others. Indeed, the present uprising of Iraqis is not only a part of the wider struggle against savage globalisation and “free” capital, it is its forefront battle. It is because the Iraqis refuse to surrender their sovereignty to multinational corporations that Iraq is being destroyed so viciously.

While the occupation is a disaster for the United States, for Iraqi society it is a catastrophe. With the aid of its allies, the US has destroyed all that Iraqis built in modern times.

It should come as no surprise that Iraqis will continue struggling against the occupation in order to restore their society. The large educated and marginalised middle class, along with the impoverished working class and unemployed youth deprived of state subsidies, have no interest in collaborating with the US policy of creating a class of blood-soaked feudal warlords. Resistance is the only path for Iraqis to true liberty, democracy, peace, dignity and achieving their interests, both as individuals and as a people. The US administration has succeeded in nothing but destruction, bloodshed and lies.

The Iraqi Resistance is by definition democratic as it is the spontaneous expression of a people who took its destiny into its hands, and is by definition progressive as it defends the interests of the people.

While Western societies pose as being democratic, street action and popular consensus over the past four years has proven that Western structures of political governance are impervious to popular will. Despite its failure to solidify our trust in our ability to change history, the anti-war and anti-globalisation movement, in its various forms of expression, proves that the people understand the current divorce between their aspirations and the individuals, parties and institutions that are supposed to represent and defend them and their interests.

New ways of civil struggle must be found, and urgently. While its failure is comprehensive, this US administration shows no sign of changing course. Iraq and the world cannot wait until November 2008, by which time this US administration and its local collaborators could have killed another one million Iraqis on top of the one million killed since 2003. Rigorous action is needed, including the impeachment and prosecution of responsible state leaders and officials for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of genocide.

We should support the call of Tun Dr Mahatir Mohammed to criminalise war as a means of resolving disputes among nations. We should support this call not only because war is a crime, but also because war again has been proven useless. Iraq cannot be broken and cannot be subjugated.

The defeat of the United States and the occupation should be a lesson; that never again a military force tries to subjugate the people of another country. The US did not and cannot achieve its goals, even if it exterminates whole sections of Iraqi society. To succeed in stopping this insanity, the anti-war movement must revise all its terminology and refuse the terms dictated by the occupation.

We must condemn the ignorance that accepts the dehumanising of the other. We must refuse the word “insurgency” and substitute it for what exists in reality: legitimate and legal resistance against vicious foreign occupation. Occupation is a *de facto* condition, not a *de jure* determination. With around 200,000 foreign forces on Iraqi soil, Iraq cannot be but

described as an occupied country. Detainees in Iraq should thus be considered prisoners of war, with all the protected rights the Third Geneva Convention assures them.

We ought all to be humbled by the losses this people has been prepared to endure for our sake and demand the complete, unconditional and immediate withdrawal of occupation forces from Iraqi soil, along with the cancellation of any law, treaty, agreement or contract passed under occupation and the fair payment of reparations and compensations for the tragic human and material losses the Iraqis have suffered in defence of civilisation.

We must refuse in total the culture of the military-imperial state if we are to contribute to the wave of resistance rising worldwide in defence of civilisation, justice, independence and coexistence.

We must retrieve recognition from any entity imposed by the United States and that claims to represent the people of Iraq. Long live the Iraqi people and its sole representative, the Iraqi Resistance.

The writer is a member of the Executive Committee of The BRussels Tribunal and a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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