

US Financial Collapse Will End Bush/Cheney Iraq War

And it won't be 'a time of our choosing'

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*"Come and see our overflowing morgues and find our little ones for us...
You may find them in this corner or the other, a little hand poking out, pointing out at you...
Come and search for them in the rubble of your "surgical" air raids, you may find a little leg
or a little head... pleading for your attention.
Come and see them amassed in the garbage dumps, scavenging morsels of food...
Come and see, come..."~ "Flying Kites," Layla Anwar*

The US Military has won every battle it has fought in Iraq, but it has lost the war.

Wars are won politically, not militarily. Bush doesn't understand this. He still clings to the belief that a political settlement can be imposed through force. But he is mistaken. The use of overwhelming force has only spread the violence and added to the political instability. Now Iraq is ungovernable. Was that the objective? Miles of concrete blast-walls snake through Baghdad to separate the warring parties; the country is fragmented into a hundred smaller pieces each ruled by local militia commanders. These are the signs of failure not success. That's why the American people no longer support the occupation. They're just being practical; they know Bush's plan won't work. As Nir Rosen says, "Iraq has become Somalia."

The administration still supports Iraqi President Nouri al Maliki, but al-Maliki is a meaningless figurehead who will have no effect on the country's future. He has no popular base of support and controls nothing beyond the walls of the Green Zone. The al-Maliki government is merely an Arab façade designed to convince the American people that political progress is being made, but there is no progress. It's a sham. The future is in the hands of the men with guns; they're the ones who have divided Iraq into locally-controlled fiefdoms and they are the ones who will ultimately decide who will rule the state. At present, the fighting between the factions is being described as "sectarian warfare," but the term is intentionally misleading. The fighting is political in nature; the various militias are competing with each other to see who will fill the vacuum left by the removal of Saddam. It's a power struggle. The media likes to portray the conflict as a clash between half-crazed Arabs - "dead-enders and terrorists" - who relish the idea killing their countrymen, but that's just a way of demonizing the enemy. In truth, the violence is entirely rational; it is the inevitable reaction to the dissolution of the state and the occupation by foreign troops. Many military experts predicted that there would be outbreaks of fighting after the initial invasion, but their warnings were shrugged off by clueless politicians and the cheerleading media. Now the violence has flared up again in Basra and Baghdad, and there is no end in sight. Only one thing seems certain, Iraq's future will not be decided at the ballot box. Bush has made sure

of that.

The US military does not rule Iraq nor does it have the power to control events on the ground. It's just one of many militias vying for power in a state that is ruled by warlords. After the army conducts combat operations, it is forced to retreat to its camps and bases. This point needs to be emphasized in order to understand that there is no real future for the occupation. The US simply does not have the manpower to hold territory or to establish security. In fact, the presence of American troops incites violence because they are seen as forces of occupation, not liberators. Surveys show that the vast majority of the Iraqi people want US troops to leave. The military has destroyed too much of the country and slaughtered too many people to expect that these attitudes will change anytime soon. Iraqi poet and blogger Layla Anwar sums up the feelings of many of the war's victims in a recent post on her web site "An Arab Woman's Blues":

"At the gates of Babylon the Great, you are still struggling, fighting away, chasing this or the other, detaining, bombing from above, filling up morgues, hospitals, graveyards and embassies and borders with queues for exit-visas.

Not one Iraqi wishes your presence. Not one Iraqi accepts your occupation.

Got news for you SOBs, you will never control Iraq, not in six years, not in ten years, not in 20 years....You have brought upon yourself the hate and the curse of all Iraqis, Arabs and the rest of the world...now face your agony." (Layla Anwar; "An Arab Woman's Blues: Reflections in a sealed bottle")

Is Bush hoping to change the mind of Layla or the millions of other Iraqis who have lost loved ones or been forced into exile or seen their country and culture crushed beneath the boot heel of foreign occupation? The hearts and minds campaign is lost. The US will never be welcome in Iraq.

According to a survey in the British Medical Journal Lancet more than a million Iraqis have been killed in the war. Another four million have been either internally displaced or have fled the country. But the figures tell us nothing about the magnitude of the disaster that Bush has caused by attacking Iraq. The invasion is the greatest human catastrophe in the Middle East since the Nakba in 1948. Living standards have declined precipitously in every area - infant mortality, clean water, food, security, medical supplies, education, electrical power, employment etc. Even oil production is still below pre-war levels. The invasion is the most comprehensive policy failure since Vietnam; everything has gone wrong. The heart of the Arab world has descended into chaos. The suffering is incalculable.

The main problem is the occupation; it is the primary catalyst for violence and an obstacle to political settlement. As long as the occupation persists, so will the fighting. The claims that the so-called surge has changed the political landscape are greatly exaggerated. Retired Lt. General William Odom commented on this point in an interview on the Jim Lehrer News Hour:

"The surge has sustained military instability and achieved nothing in political consolidation.... Things are much worse now. And I don't see them getting any better. This was foreseeable a year and a half ago. And to continue to put the cozy veneer of comfortable half-truths on this is to deceive the American public and to make them think it is not the charade it is.... When you say that the Lebanization of Iraq is taking place, yes,

but not because of Iran, but because the U.S. went in and made this kind of fragmentation possible. And it has occurred over the last five years.... The al-Maliki government is worse off now... The notion that there's some kind of progress is absurd. The al-Maliki government uses its Ministry of Interior like a death squad militia. So to call Sadr an extremist and Maliki a good guy just overlooks the reality that there are no good guys." (Jim Lehrer News Hour)

The war in Iraq was lost before the first shot was fired. The conflict never had the support of the American people and Iraq never posed a threat to US national security. The whole pretext for the war was based on lies; it was a coup orchestrated by elites and the media to carry out a far-right agenda. Now the mission has failed, but no one wants to admit their mistakes by withdrawing; so the butchery continues without pause.

How Will It End?

The Bush administration has decided to pursue a strategy that is unprecedented in US history. It has decided to continue to prosecute a war that has already been lost morally, strategically, and militarily. But fighting a losing war has its costs. America is much weaker now than it was when Bush first took office in 2000; politically, economically and militarily. US power and prestige around the world will continue to deteriorate until the troops are withdrawn from Iraq. But that's unlikely to happen until all other options have been exhausted. Deteriorating economic conditions in the financial markets are putting enormous downward pressure on the dollar. The corporate bond and equities markets are in disarray; the banking system is collapsing, consumer spending is down, tax revenues are falling, and the country is headed into a painful and protracted recession. The US will leave Iraq sooner than many pundits believe, but it will not be at a time of our choosing. Rather, the conflict will end when the United States no longer has the capacity to wage war. That time is not far off.

The Iraq War signals the end of US interventionism for at least a generation; maybe longer. The ideological foundation for the war (preemption/regime change) has been exposed as a baseless justification for unprovoked aggression. Someone will have to be held accountable. There will have to be international tribunals to determine who is responsible in the deaths of over one million Iraqis.

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