

Q: Why refer to "the occupation of Iraq"?

President Bush admitted in April, 2003: "As a proud and independent people, Iraqis do not support an indefinite occupation and neither does America." Yet his administration is building 14 permanent military bases, and Rumsfeld talks of an occupation for 12 more years or longer. Nor are we making progress, as the US Commander told the Senate on 9/29/05: we now have only 1 Iraqi battalion that can fight on its own, down from 3 such battalions claimed in June 2005.

Q: How much is this occupation costing us?

About \$150,000 per minute, not counting long term costs such as interest on the debt, and caring for the tens of thousands of wounded veterans. Compare that to domestic cutbacks, such as eliminating the Milw. Public Library bookmobile program to save \$250,000; we could pay for that if our efforts succeed in ending the occupation just 2 minutes earlier. For every 7 minutes we speed up ending this occupation, we can save \$1 million in taxes, the debt, or for domestic needs.

Q: Isn't withdrawing the troops now an extreme position?

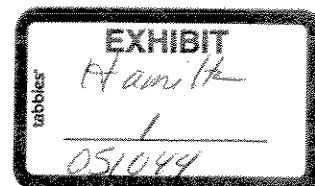
According to the NY Times/CBS poll (9/16/05), 52% of Americans favor immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops. This referendum will not be on the ballot until April 2006, and calls on the U.S. to immediately start withdrawing our troops.

Q: Doesn't this campaign undermine support for our troops?

Not according to Wisconsin military families like Marine Ray Maida, who had two sons serve in Iraq: Chris returned alive, but Sgt. Mark Maida was killed in May 2005. They volunteered to protect the U.S. after 9/11, but then found themselves in Iraq in a war without a justification that anyone could adequately explain. The Maidas say that it is unfair to have only a small part of our population, those in the military, make all the sacrifices. "The US is not supporting the troops now," by failing to give them proper equipment, say the Maidas; our civilians are not taxed to pay for the effort, and many have even forgotten the war is still going on. With the only sacrifice being made by the military families (plus our grandchildren who will have to pay for it), that's another reason to bring the troops home now. (www.wpr.org 9/29/05)

Q: If we leave, won't be abandoning the Iraqis to chaos and a possible civil war?

The sad truth is that the indefinite presence of US troops as occupiers is adding to the insurgency, and the longer it lasts, the more likely it is to result in a civil war. Leading US experts and observers on the scene who had opposed immediate withdrawal, have changed their minds and now favor withdrawal, because Iraqi anger at the US occupation has grown stronger, the longer our troops stay there.



Q: Why begin by withdrawing our national guard and reserves?

Because they are needed at home, not as long term occupiers. The Hurricane Katrina disaster hit with 35-40% of the Mississippi & Louisiana national guards in Iraq, including helicopters and other equipment which should have been available to protect people in their home states. Many first responders, like firefighters and police are in Iraq, when they should be here.