

The Campus Antiwar Network (CAN) is an independent, democratic, and grassroots network of campus-based antiwar committees. The points of unity of CAN are:

1. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all troops from Iraq and demand that the US government pay reparations to the Iraqi people.
2. We stand opposed to the occupation of Iraq under the auspices of the United Nations or any other foreign power and support the right of the Iraqi people to self-determination.
3. We stand opposed to the so-called "War on Terror" and all US wars of aggression.
4. We stand opposed to the occupation and invasion of Afghanistan and call for the immediate withdrawal of all US troops.
5. We stand opposed to the oppression of the Palestinian people and the occupation of Palestinian land; we support the right of all Palestinians to self-determination.
6. We stand opposed to racist scapegoating and all attacks on civil liberties.
7. We demand money for education, jobs and healthcare, not war and occupation!

Campus Antiwar Network

What is CAN?

The Campus Antiwar Network is an independent, democratic, grassroots network of campus-based antiwar groups.

CAN brings together student antiwar activists to generalize our experiences and works to support students in starting antiwar groups at schools across the country.

We also function as a place where students can come together to discuss issues facing the movement and democratically decide what strategy and actions are best for the current period.

At our third National Conference, Nov 2004, we voted to deepen our work with anti-war vets, GIs and military families and begin a demilitarization campaign to kick military recruiters off campuses. We're also involved in fending off right-wing attacks at campuses across the country.

To affiliate your group with CAN, email info@campusantiwar.net

We CAN Stop the War!

www.campusantiwar.net

Why we say:

Bring the Troops Home

N:OW



campusantiwar.network 

independent, democratic, grassroots

By Campus Antiwar Network at New York University

Bring the Troops Home Now

Campus Anti-War Network

By New York University Campus Antiwar Network

The brutality of what it means to occupy another country is on full display in Iraq—even the mainstream press can't ignore the reality of life for ordinary Iraqis and for those standing up to join the resistance and kick the United States out of their country.

The US government conducted an illegal war of conquest against Iraq. The real reasons for invasion had nothing to do with weapons of mass destruction, getting rid of Saddam Hussein, or the "liberation" of an oppressed people.

The US has two intentions in Iraq: one, to gain control of Iraqi resources (most obviously oil) and give the green light to corporations like Halliburton and Bechtel to set up shop in Iraq; and two, to use Iraq as an example of the fact that the US calls the shots in the Middle East and any ruler or people that stands in the way will pay a deadly price. The Bush administration went to war in order to occupy Iraq and now the US is attempting to consolidate that occupation with a U.S.-led puppet government and Iraqi police force.

And – with 100,000 Iraqis dead, over 2000 killed in Fallujah in the past month, – this year has left no doubt as to how far the US is willing to go to carry out its interests. We have witnessed gut-wrenching displays of torture in Abu Ghraib and the U.S. bombing of wedding parties, hospitals, and civilian houses. Now they are demolishing entire cities where the resistance has bases.

This horror can only end through the immediate withdrawal of US troops. Anything short of this demand inevitably means more war, more brutality, more torture, and more death of both Iraqis and US soldiers.

The US government, in its quest for oil and empire, has no good intentions in Iraq. Nor can the occupation be altered into a benevolent force by supplanting US soldiers with so-called UN "peacekeepers." In order to ensure corporate control over the entire country, the US is hoping to engage in a phased withdrawal of US troops by bringing in the UN and foreign troops, setting up sham elections in January, and paving the way for a puppet government that will rule in US interests.

Unfortunately, many anti-war activists see the process of phased withdrawal as a way forward for Iraq. In this article, we argue that this is wrong on two counts. First, it misses the reality of what the U.S. is doing in Iraq. The U.S. occupation is responsible for the death, torture, and immiseration of countless Iraqis, as well as of the soldiers forced to carry out that violence. It is impossible to look at pictures of the assault in Falluja and argue that the occupation must continue to prevent "chaos" in Iraq. The occupation is chaos, and it is also the planned and inevitable violence of an occupying force trying to break the resistance of the people it occupies. Every day that the U.S. occupies Iraq, it makes life worse for the Iraqi people. If we say now that the U.S. forces must stay because things are too bad to leave, then what will we say in six months, when their continued presence has made things much worse? By failing to grasp that the U.S. is the source of the terrible problems in Iraq, and could not be otherwise,

Get involved with the Campus Antiwar Network!

CAN is an independent, democratic, grassroots Network of campus based antiwar committees... www.campusantiwar.net
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See back cover for more info

Recommended literature:

Paul D'Amato, "The Politics of Resistance: What should activists say about the fight against occupation?" *Socialist Worker*, July 23, 2004. http://www.socialistworker.org/2004-2/507/507_10_Resistance.shtml

Ron Jacobs, "The Only Answer is Immediate Withdrawal." *Counterpunch*, April 23, 2004. <http://www.counterpunch.org/jacobs04232004.html>

Naomi Klein, "Yes, you must pull out - but also pay for the damage." *The Guardian*, Dec 27 2004. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1379892,00.html>

Joe Ramsey, "American Occupation: Think rampaging elephants." *Left Hook*. <http://www.lefthook.org/Politics/Ramsey111804.html>

Eric Ruder, "The Case for Withdrawal." *International Socialist Review*, July-August 2004. <http://www.isreview.org/issues/36/caseforwithdrawal.shtml>

Howard Zinn, "Support Our Troops: Bring Them Home." *Miami Herald*, Jan 22, 2005. <http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0122-01.htm>

Occupation is Not Liberation (2nd Edition)

This pamphlet seeks to examine the real motivations behind the occupation of Iraq and argues for the need to build a mass movement to end the occupation. Published 2-17-2004. [Available at CAN's website in the "literature" section](#)

The Growing Dissent: Why Troops Are Turning Against the Occupation

Not since the Vietnam-era have so many men and women in uniform been dissatisfied, and many are turning against the war because of their experiences on the ground. In a Stars and Stripes poll taken of troops in Iraq in August of 2003, almost fifty percent said it was unlikely or "very unlikely" that they would re-enlist in the military once their terms were up, and described their unit's morale as "low" or "very low." Published 2-17-2004. [Available at CAN's website in the "literature" section](#)

Eyewitness Report from Iraq "We must demand an end to the occupation now"

Read a personal account from a CAN member who traveled in a delegation to Iraq. "Sticking out of the top of an armored vehicle, sitting behind a huge gun and wearing a ski mask, the first soldier I saw looked terrifying. I could only imagine how Iraqis felt to see these troops patrolling their country."

[Available at CAN's website in the "news" section](#)

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Islamism will most likely take hold, and women will pay the price. But the greatest disaster would be for the antiwar movement in the U.S. to be misled into a pro-war position by the idea that our government will make things better for women in Iraq.

This idea has been promulgated through the U.S. war and occupation in Afghanistan— a war that many mainstream women’s rights groups in the U.S. celebrated.

It is worth taking a closer look, however, at the condition of women in Afghanistan today. Large numbers of women and young girls still face rape by members of armed warlord gangs, forced marriages, violence within their homes, and fear of attending school. In the recent “election” (widely noted as a sham when the ink meant to prevent voter fraud turned out to be removable), many women reported being unable to vote without permission from their husbands.

Women’s liberation in Iraq, and Afghanistan, will have to come in tandem with a broader struggle against imperialism. It may begin with women demanding their place as equal members of the struggle to kick the U.S. out – and uniting men and women the way the struggle against the occupation has already given rise to striking instances of unity between Sunni and Shiite Muslims in Iraq, for example.

Moreover, the condition of women cannot be separated from the overall context of the occupation and the devastation it has wrought on the people of Afghanistan. The average life expectancy for adults dropped from 46 in 2001 to 43 in 2004. Only 9 percent of Afghans have access to electricity, and 6 percent to safe drinking water. An estimated one woman dies every twenty minutes in pregnancy or childbirth.^v

No one could confuse this with liberation – for women or for men. This is equally true of Afghanistan and Iraq. Thousands of Iraqis die every week, their homes blown into pieces, and their children dead from starvation and illness. There is rampant unemployment, little access to basic foods, entire cities without electricity, and a refugee crisis beyond belief.

Bush has no mandate for such brutality and it is our responsibility to let him know.

Our stand is simple but must be firm – Iraq is for Iraqis. Only the immediate withdrawal of US troops can bring any real possibility of democracy in the Middle East. This means the U.S. must be defeated in its aim to occupy Iraq as a step to dominating the whole world. We will contribute to this defeat – by building protests here at home that carry our demand: that not one more human being should die for oil at the hands of George W. Bush.

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Citations:

ⁱ Roberts, Les, et al. “Mortality before and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq: cluster sample survey.” *The Lancet*, Volume 364 Issue 9448 Page 1857

ⁱⁱ Qassem Daoud, Iraqi Secretary of State of National Security, Nov 26, 2004, Baghdad.

ⁱⁱⁱ Qassem Daoud, Iraqi Secretary of State of National Security, Nov 26, 2004, Baghdad.

^{iv} Qassem Daoud, Iraqi Secretary of State of National Security, Nov 26, 2004, Baghdad.

^v All Afghanistan statistics from: Dwyer, Katherine, “Afghanistan’s Endless War,” *International Socialist Review*, September-October 2004. Available online: <http://www.isreview.org/issues/37/afghanistan.shtml>

the argument for “withdrawal later” becomes an argument for “withdrawal never,” and has the effect of serving as a left-wing cover for the U.S. to solidify its dominance over Iraqis.

Second, we will argue that the arguments against immediate withdrawal rest on mistaken ideas that Iraqis are not as capable of governing themselves as any other group of people. Our conclusion is that only an immediate withdrawal of all US troops has any hope of bringing democracy and freedom to the Iraqi people.

What does “phased withdrawal” really mean?

We saw variants of this demand about a year ago at protests where some demonstrators held up signs that said “US out UN in.” We hear about it today, as well - the Win Without War Coalition, for instance, calls for a phased withdrawal. This is advocated as a “more practical” alternative to immediate withdrawal that will better appeal to Americans. What this argument misses is the current goal of the US in Iraq, that is, to engage in a phased withdrawal in order to legitimize the occupation by setting up a puppet government. A successful phased withdrawal will serve only to legitimize the US assertion of its massive dominance over the wishes of the Iraqi people. We, instead, want the US to fail in subverting Iraqi sovereignty and for the US military to be kicked out of that country, leaving no US-imposed governmental structure in place.

A US-imposed regime could include any government selected, appointed, or funded by the US or its allies – including Arab states that maintain their power through US governmental support, or “multilateral” forces such as the United Nations.

The United Nations is governed by the interests of the Security Council, where the most powerful countries in the world make all decisions. The UN eventually endorsed this brutal occupation (in a 14-0 vote), under an agreement that France and Russia would be paid the bulk of Saddam Hussein’s \$400 billion international debt. The UN now serves to legitimize the US occupation under the cover of “multilateralism.”

The US also used the so-called “transfer of power” on June 30th as a step in their phased withdrawal. In reality, the “transfer of power” meant the appointment of Iyad Allawi behind closed doors and the selection of John Negroponte as US Ambassador to Iraq. Now the U.S. hopes to use elections – which, carried out by the occupying power, are guaranteed to be anything but democratic – as the latest strategy to legitimize its Iraqi puppets, co-opt certain resistance leaders, and serve as a cover for assassinating others. Thus, the elections are no step toward ending the occupation, but rather another strategy for carrying it out, and continuing to solidify U.S. interests in Iraq at the expense of the Iraqi people.

The US consistently tries to confuse people into believing that it is in the process of withdrawing its influence from Iraq - that these are all steps towards Iraqi autonomy - and the UN has served to add another layer to the confusion, as long as other powerful countries can get a piece of the economic pie.

So we face a choice: the US can withdraw on its own terms, or on ours. It will either withdraw after setting up an Iraqi police force that is strong enough to carry out US wishes, or in defeat, giving the Iraqi people a real chance at democracy.

It is crucial that the anti-war movement not support the Bush administration’s plans for phased withdrawal - and instead demand the immediate withdrawal of all US troops. If we

opposed the invasion of Iraq and believe that the US has absolutely no right to be there, then we must also call for the immediate withdrawal of US troops and a defeat for the Bush

administration, his corporate cronies, and any other government body that wishes to legitimize the deaths of innocent Iraqis and US soldiers. And in order for imperialism to be defeated in Iraq we must support unconditionally the demand for Iraq's self-determination – meaning, Iraqis (and only Iraqis) have the right to decide their future and what their country looks like.

The case for self-determination

Evidence suggests that what is shaping up in Iraq is a popular national resistance against the occupation. We may disagree with their tactics – for example, indiscriminate bombing of civilians is counterproductive to building popular support for the fight against the occupation – but we first and foremost stand in complete solidarity with the Iraqi demand to kick the largest military force in history out of their country.

It is fundamentally a question posed to antiwar activists: "Which side are you on?" We must choose the side of the Iraqis. The US will stop at nothing to maintain control of Iraq to carry out its imperialist plans, even if it means using massive violence to crush the Iraqi resistance and using US soldiers as cannon fodder. The US goal is fundamentally incompatible with giving Iraqis control over their own country.

The Iraqi people, US soldiers, and most people in this country have a common interest in defeating the US government's plans for Iraq. US soldiers and Iraqis are paying with their lives for a war that benefits only the rich of this country. Billions of dollars taken out of our pockets while we watch our schools crumble, our tuition increase, and our health care become privatized.

When the Bush administration invaded Iraq in March of 2003, they thought it would be a cakewalk. Instead they have been met with a resistance that only continues to grow the bloodier the occupation gets. For every resistance fighter shot down, two more will join. The only solution is to remove the source of the problem – the occupation.

An occupation propped up with racism

Racism plays a critical role in legitimizing US occupations around the world. Epithets spewed from the Bush administration and the media when speaking of ordinary Iraqis reflect such racism: "terrorist," "fanatic," "extremist," "insurgent," "fundamentalist." How ironic that George W. Bush, a man who believes he is appointed by God, calls Iraqis "fundamentalists."

These words imply that the culture that exists in the Middle East is inherently insignificant compared to that of the North-Western world. It is these "culturalist" ideas that are a fundamental tool used by those who are pro-occupation for keeping their interests intact throughout the duration of the war. The conclusion of these ideas is often an argument that the US cannot pull out of Iraq because "chaos" will inevitably ensue or that Islamic countries are somehow incapable of democracy.

By depicting the culture as violent and unruly, they instead propagate the notion that Iraqis are fundamentally unable to govern themselves. Thus, the seeds of the pro-occupation mindset are sown. We in the antiwar movement then find ourselves pitted against each other politically, believing that the occupation cannot end because the country would be thrown into chaos. What this misses is that the US government is the

sole source of chaos in Iraq.

In fact, the US occupation depends on divisions among racial and ethnic lines in order to maintain power, since playing up these divisions is the best way to prevent a united national liberation movement. This is a classic "divide and conquer" strategy used historically by colonial occupiers.

This doesn't mean that everyone who makes this argument is racist – although unambiguous racists certainly do argue it. For example, an article in the *Journal of Current History* muses, "Could it be that something particular to the Arab world makes it especially allergic to democracy or incapable of practicing it? ... [I]t is impossible to refute this supposition categorically until we have our first functioning Arab democracy."ⁱⁱⁱ This is obviously racist, and moreover, it's a sentiment that everyone in the antiwar movement rightly finds repulsive. So the point isn't that the people we meet at our tablings echoing this argument are all bigots, but rather that the racism against Arabs and Muslims that our country is steeped in serves to obscure the fundamental dynamic of the occupation. That fundamental dynamic is imperialism and colonialism on one side, and a basic democratic right to self-determination on the other.

The British occupation of Northern Ireland provides a useful counterpoint. The population there is Catholic, a religion sometimes associated with the oppression of women all over the world. But where are the left-wing voices and the women's groups in the US calling for Britain to stay in Northern Ireland, because otherwise a Catholic government might come to power and oppress women? Actually, no one on the Left makes that argument – because the colonial nature of that occupation is clear. Our job as the antiwar movement should be to make it similarly clear about Iraq.

What if the US leaves and Islamists take power?

An argument we often hear at our tablings on campus is that immediate withdrawal is too dangerous because it could allow an Islamist government to come to power, and, in particular, that this would result in the oppression of Iraqi women.

It is important to start by stating that there's nothing inherent about Islam that makes its adherents gravitate toward sexism or oppressive ideas. Islam, like all religions, stands in for a variety of views. Moreover, there is nothing inherent about Muslims that leads them toward Islamism as the only political response to imperialism.

In fact, the resistance in Iraq currently encompasses a wide range of ideas, some Islamist, some not. While it's very hard in the US to access information about what the Iraqi resistance is really like, one thing that is clear: the US government wants to paint the entirety of it as led by a small number of Islamist leaders from outside Iraq. In reality, though, the resistance seems to be primarily a national liberation movement informed by a variety of ideas. For example, although the Islamist Abu Musab Zarqawi is constantly publicized in the US, as the leader of the Iraqi resistance, Iraqi exile Sami Ramadani has noted that in September, while there were 2,700 attacks on US and US-puppet forces in Iraq, Zarqawi had claimed credit for exactly six of them.^{iv}

Many who argue against the possibility of immediate withdrawal reference the oppression of women under Islamic governments. The argument goes that when the US withdraws,