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Voice of the People
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Real support for Iraqi people

A year ago on June 28, the United States supposedly transferred political power to Iraqis. Two Iraqi labor leaders on a national tour speaking in Cleveland recently said the time has come for the United States to immediately leave Iraq altogether.

The labor leaders are with the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions of Iraq, part of the newly formed Iraqi Freedom Congress, a broad organization committed to establishing a free, secular and nonethnic government composed of political parties, trade unions, people's councils, associations and institutions.

In their talk, sponsored by U.S. Labor Against the War, the labor leaders said that Iraq cannot achieve real democracy so long as the U.S. military, corporate contractors and advisers remain in their nation, the presence of which only strengthens and legitimizes "Islamic fundamentalists and tribal and political gangsters."

The immediate end of the U.S. military occupation and withdrawal of U.S.-based corporations will weaken the reactionary forces in Iraq. It will also empower workers and others who are striving, at tremendous personal risk, for a stable and peaceful civil society with legitimate institutions and structures, instead of the current system created and protected by foreign occupation forces.

Real Iraqi self-determination beginning at the grass roots can and should be supported by us -- but not through a perpetual war and occupation that continues to cost lives and resources on all sides for nothing more than an expanded U.S. military empire and enrichments of multinationals such as the Halliburton corporation.

Real support for the Iraqi people should respect their wishes. We must demand an immediate U.S. withdrawal and the creation of a U.S. fund to rebuild Iraq. We must also support groups like the FWCUI and the Iraqi Freedom Congress abroad and USLAW and other anti-war groups at home.

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