

[letter submitted to Akron Beacon Journal on 9/13/07]

Honor Democracy in Iraq

If the Bush administration and others who support the Iraq war and occupation are truly committed to "democracy," military forces there should start packing.

"Bringing democracy to Iraq" was the stated justification for the 2003 invasion – not controlling Iraq's vast oil reserves, establishing permanent military bases in that strategic part of the world, further enriching US-based weapons contractors, or privatizing/corporatizing every sector of Iraqi society.

Commitment to "democracy" requires honoring the views of the Iraqi people. The just-released BBC/ABC News poll of Iraqis lists these findings:

- 63% believe it was wrong to initially invade,
- 61% believe security conditions have worsened since the military "surge,"
- 75% believe US-led reconstruction has been either non-existent or ineffective,
- 80% believe the US/coalition has done a bad job at carrying out their responsibilities,
- 79% oppose US/coalition military forces,
- 47% believe the US military should leave immediately...a higher percentage from February, and growing.

Dedication to freedom, liberty and democracy in Iraq starts with dedication to the will of their people. Pack up the military duffle bags. Give orders to begin shutting down military bases. Let Iraqis govern themselves.

Self-governance is a bedrock principle of this nation. It's time to practice it in Iraq.

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