

Where do we start? No Permanent Bases in Iraq

Thank you all for coming to the forum today to discuss American foreign policy in Iraq and what we can do to influence the decision of our legislators to end the war and occupation of Iraq. Some of our legislators sent representatives today and we thank you for devoting your time to this important forum.

Others in the legislator chose not to hear the concerns of their constituents, but their lack of concern will not stop our voices from being heard. Again, thank those of you who are here to listen to what we have to say and take our message back to our elected officials.

Boy! Are we in a mess. Almost 4,000 Americans dead, millions of Iraqi's isplaces, thousands of Iraqis, including women and children killed, a \$7 billion defense bill signed into law in January while 47 million Americans live without basic health care, and another 50 million underinsured, and we are bogged down in a war with no end in sight. America's middle class and poor are losing their homes at an astronomical rate due to corporate greed and we can't even rebuild one of our own cities with privateers bilking Americans of their tax dollars just so they can make a profit.

It can be down right depressing when the richest nation in the world spends trillions of dollars on weapons programs, funding over 700 military bases around the world, stretching from Central America all the way to the Indian Ocean, strategically placed in third world countries, all in the name of protecting America's interest.

I often pondered what exactly America's interest is, when I hear President Bush use those words as though we have a moral right to do whatever it takes in the world to fuel our economy in order to make the top 1% in our country wealthier, and let's not forget the war profiteers. I think back to the 80's when our CIA overthrew Allende in Chile as he was attempting to organize copper-rich third world countries because the third world was tired of being exploited by America's interests.

Sorry about my digress. We are not here to wallow in hopelessness and ride that wave wherever it leads. We are here today to swim against the current and change the direction of our once proud country – an America that Europe and countries around the world respected. We are to do what is truly American-to stand up and raise our voices to defend our Constitution, and our Democracy.

Where do we start? We can start here, today-by applying pressure on our Senators and Congressmen to challenge the Bush Administration in these one-sided agreements for Iraqi oil-for establishing a lasting presence in Iraq with already established permanent bases to protect their oil for our consumption-by

the use of these military bases to threaten Iraq's neighbors, particularly, Iran. All of us sitting here know this is the reality of our foreign policy.

We are asking our representatives today, to work with members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, with colleagues like Barbara Lee, Lynn Woolsey, and Maxine Waters, to call on US Attorney General Michael Mukasey for details on the steps his office is taking to ensure that the Department of Defense and the white house are complying with the letter of the law regarding the ban on permanent military bases in Iraq-to make Mukasey enforce the law.

Bush has destroyed so much of our precious democracy in only seven years, but it didn't start with him or the Neo-cons. They just put America's foreign policy on fast track.

This forum today is in actuality not meant to be a lecture-it's a call to action. I have brought information here today, with some sample letters included, and I ask that you take it home with you. Please read the material. And then I ask you to write our Ohio delegation, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi and House Democratic Majority Leader Steney Hoyer explaining why we must leave Iraq and dismantle our military bases in that region.

And, should we elect a Democratic President in 2008-don't think for a moment that our work is over. It is just beginning.

- Patrick Carano

PERMANENT BASES IN IRAQ

HR 4986

SEC. 1222. LIMITATION ON AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR CERTAIN PURPOSES RELATING TO IRAQ.

No funds appropriated pursuant to an authorization of appropriations in this Act may be obligated or expended for a purpose as follows:

(1) To establish any military installation or base for the purpose of providing for the permanent stationing of United States Armed Forces in Iraq.

(2) To exercise United States control of the oil resources of Iraq

President Bush's Signing Statement

President Bush Signs H.R. 4986, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 into Law

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4986, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008. The Act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, and for national security-related energy programs.

Provisions of the Act, including sections 841, 846, 1079, and 1222, purport to impose requirements that could inhibit the President's ability to carry out his constitutional obligations to take care that the laws be faithfully executed, to protect national security, to supervise the executive branch, and to execute his authority as Commander in Chief. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the constitutional authority of the President.

GEORGE W. BUSH - THE WHITE HOUSE, January 28, 2008.