These Newsletters provide us with facts and arguments for our own writings and actions. Write and call your congressional delegation AND THEIR STAFF, your Party leaders, newspapers, film an OMNI News, an OMNI Book Sampler, an OMNI Commentary, create a forum, gather to read the names of the killed.

You can influence your senators and others in your community by writing a letter to the editor of one of your local newspapers. Congressional staff tell that most senators read every letter to the editor in the local papers in their state -- especially if the letter mentions her or his name.

“Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.” Martin Luther King, Jr.

Don’t whine or rant, speak cant: take action, organize!!

CONGRESSMAN KUCINICH would end the war simply by not funding it. Watch his events calendar. http://www.dennis4president.com/upcoming-events/
The congressional contact information is on their website. http://www.kucinich.house.gov/Contact/

Dick: I began this special newsletter on Iraq by gathering information about the illegality, inhumanity, and incompetence of the occupation. The quantity of those sources is enormous. What follows is a selection of related materials:

Facts about the Destruction of Iraq Caused by the US
US History of Violence by Stephen Lendman
US Imperialism for Oil by James Wood
Costs of the War and Occupation, diverse authors
Failure of Democrats by Helen Thomas
Lincoln, Pryor, Clinton
Military Families Speak Out
Reform Judaism Speaks Out
No End In Sight Film

DESTRUCTION OF IRAQ BY US

> It is said that Iraq is the world's best-known conflict but the least well-known humanitarian crisis.
> In the United States, where public attention span is low but the capacity for denial high, Iraq's daily carnage no longer commands headlines. American public discourse long ago shifted to the domestic political implications of Iraq for George W. Bush et al.
> Those who do think of Iraq think mostly of the murderous sectarianism of the Sunnis and Shiites. If Muslims
are killing each other, there's not much America can do, Iraq being another Yugoslavia - once the iron grip of Saddam
Hussein or Josip Tito was gone, all the old animosities re-emerged.

But in Iraq, there was no such suppressed hatred. Shiites and Sunnis had always lived in harmony. Inter-marriage was common. The bombed-out Shiite shrine in Samara was in a Sunni neighbourhood.

The more apt parallel is with the 1947 partition of British India that precipitated a mass migration and a massacre among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs who had lived in harmony for centuries.

When the state abrogates its most basic role of maintaining social order, anti-social forces and criminals can send scared people into a frenzy of primitive behaviour.

What's happening in Iraq is the direct result of American war-mongering and criminal incompetence.

Since the 2003 U.S. invasion, between 75,000 and 1.2 million Iraqis have been killed (depending on who's counting). This is in addition to the 1 million Iraqis, half of them children under 5, who died slow deaths during the 1991-2003 U.S.-led United Nations economic sanctions (a UNESCO estimate).

More than 4 million Iraqis have been displaced. Half have fled to Syria, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere. This is the largest forced migration of people in the Middle East since 1948, according to UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency.

Nearly 8 million Iraqis - one in three - are in need of humanitarian aid. Nearly half the internally displaced people do not have access to the Public Distribution System of ration cards and permits. Only a third of Iraqis can access safe drinking water. The health system is collapsing. The drug distribution system has broken down. The sewage system has collapsed and only a fifth of Iraqis have access to a functional sanitary system.

Three-fourths of the internally displaced are either women (28 per cent) or children (48 per cent). Ninety per cent of those who die violent deaths are men, leaving huge numbers of widows and orphans without support,' according to a special Iraq edition of Forced Migration Review, a publication of the Refugee Studies Centre of the University of Oxford (fmreview.org/Iraq).

'In the short term, there appears to be no way to address the protection vacuum in much of Iraq. Multinational Force Iraq and the Iraqi Security Forces are incapable of protecting civilians.' Prostitution is on the rise. 'Young girls are increasingly obliged to contribute to family incomes. Consequently, the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence is on the rise,' say Jose Riera and Andrew Harper, of UNHCR (unhcr.org/iraq). 'Child labour and other means of exploitation are increasingly reported.' UNICEF estimates that 4.5 million children are under-nourished. One child in 10 is under-weight. One in five is short for their age. In some areas, up to 90 per cent of children are not in school.

This is one reality show you won't see on your television.
OCCUPATION

Ex-Commander Says Iraq Effort Is 'a Nightmare'
http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/10/13/4522/

Lawmakers: US Covering Up Iraqi Corruption
http://www.commondreams.org/archive/2007/10/13/4520/

OCCUPATION = GENOCIDE

“What the antiwar movement can and should be doing is to unmask the US counterinsurgency as the machinery of genocide. It should constantly remind the public that it is Iraqis who are paying the heaviest price.” A.K. Gupta, “The Disease of Occupation,” WIN Magazine (WRL)(Fall 2007).

SURVEY US HISTORY TO UNDERSTAND HOW “PEACE LOVING” USA COULD INVADE AND OCCupy AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ AND THREATEN IRAN

“A Culture of Violence” by Stephen Lendman (from Edrene M)
http://www.zmag.org/content/showarticle.cfm?SectionID=72&ItemID=13882

Other Stephen Lendman Articles
http://www.populistamerica.com/stephen_lendman

VIETNAM AND IRAQI WARS

IRAQ AND VIETNAM WARS

A. Vietnam's real lessons

“The war is indeed relevant to Iraq -- but not the way Bush thinks.”
By Andrew J. Bacevich

August 25, 2007

FINDING IN THE DEBACLE of the Vietnam War a rationale for sustaining the U.S. military presence in Iraq requires considerable imagination. If nothing else, President Bush's speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars earlier this week revealed a hitherto unsuspected capacity for creativity. Yet as an exercise in historical analysis, his remarks proved to be self-serving and selective.

For years, the Bush administration has rejected all comparisons between Iraq and Vietnam. Now the president cites Vietnam to bolster his insistence on "seeing the Iraqis through as they build their democracy." To do otherwise, he says, will invite a recurrence of the events that followed the fall of Saigon, when "millions of innocent citizens" were murdered, imprisoned or forced to flee.

The president views the abandonment of our Southeast Asian allies as a disgrace, deploring the fate suffered by the "boat people" and the victims of the Khmer Rouge. According to Bush, withdrawing from Iraq constitutes a comparable act of abandonment. Beyond that, the president finds little connection between Vietnam and Iraq. This is unfortunate. For that earlier war offers lessons of immediate relevance to the predicament we face today. As the balance of the president's VFW address makes clear, Bush remains oblivious
to the history that actually matters.

Here are a few of the lessons that he overlooks.

In unconventional wars, body counts don't really count. In the Vietnam War, superior American firepower enabled U.S. forces to prevail in most tactical engagements. We killed plenty of North Vietnamese and Viet Cong. But killing didn't produce victory -- the exertions of U.S. troops all too frequently proved to be counterproductive.

So too in Iraq -- although Bush insists on pretending otherwise. His speech had him sounding like President Lyndon Johnson, bragging that, in each month since January, U.S. troops in Iraq have "killed or captured an average of more than 1,500 Al Qaeda terrorists and other extremists." If Bush thinks that by racking up big body counts the so-called surge will reverse the course of the war, he is deceiving himself. The real question is not how many bad guys we are killing, but how many our continued presence in Iraq is creating.

There's no substitute for legitimacy. Wars like Vietnam and Iraq aren't won militarily; at best, they are settled politically. But political solutions imply the existence of legitimate political institutions, able to govern effectively and to command the loyalty of the population.

In the Republic of Vietnam, created by the United States after the partition of French Indochina, such institutions did not exist. Despite an enormous U.S. investment in nation-building, they never did. In the end, South Vietnam proved to be a fiction.

So too with Iraq, conjured up by the British after World War I out of remnants of the Ottoman Empire. As a courtesy, we might pretend that Iraq qualifies as a "nation-state," much as we pretend that members of Division I varsity football programs are "scholar-athletes." In fact, given its deep sectarian and tribal divisions, Iraq makes South Vietnam look good by comparison.

In his VFW presentation, Bush described Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri Maliki as "a good guy." Whether Maliki is a good guy or even a heckuva good guy is beside the point. The real question is whether he presides over a government capable of governing. Mounting evidence suggests that the answer to that question is no.

As a lens for strategic analysis, ideology distorts rather than clarifies. From Dwight D. Eisenhower through Richard M. Nixon, a parade of presidents convinced themselves that defending South Vietnam qualified as a vital U.S. interest. For the free world, a communist takeover of that country would imply an unacceptable defeat.

Yet when South Vietnam did fall, the strategic effect proved to be limited. The falling dominoes never did pose a threat to our shores for one simple reason: The communists of North Vietnam were less interested in promoting world revolution than in unifying their country under socialist rule. We deluded ourselves into thinking that we were defending freedom against totalitarianism. In fact, we had blundered into a civil war.

With regard to Iraq, Bush persists in making an analogous error. In his remarks to the VFW, the president described Iraq as an "ideological struggle." Our adversary there aims to crush "freedom, tolerance and dissent," he said, thereby "imposing this ideology across a vital region of the world." If we don't fight them "there," we will surely have to fight them "here."

Radical Islamists like Osama bin Laden do subscribe to a hateful ideology. But to imagine that Bin Laden and others of his ilk have the capability to control the Middle East, restoring the so-called Caliphate, is absurd, as silly as the vaunted domino theory of the 1950s and 1960s.

Politics, not ideology, will determine the future of the Middle East. That's good news and bad news. Good news because the interests and aspirations of Arabs and non-Arabs, Shiites and Sunnis, modernizers and traditionalists will combine to prevent any one faction from gaining the upper hand. Bad news because those same factors guarantee that the Middle East will remain an unstable mess for the foreseeable future.

Sometimes people can manage their own affairs. Does the U.S. need to attend to that mess? Perhaps not.

Here the experience of Vietnam following the U.S. defeat is instructive. Once the Americans departed, the Vietnamese began getting their act together. Although not a utopia, Vietnam has become a stable and increasingly prosperous nation. It is a responsible member of the international community. In Hanoi, the communists remain in power. From an American point of view, who cares?

Bush did not even allude to the condition of Vietnam today. Yet the question poses itself: Is it not possible that the people of the Middle East might be better qualified to determine their future than a cadre of American soldiers, spooks and do-gooders? The answer to that question just might be yes.

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of history and international relations at Boston University. He is a Vietnam War veteran.
RIGHT WING AND IRAQ

Chris Delacruz reports that http://www.iraqtimeline.com/ website has an impressive collection of background info. on Iraq and US right wing. Here is what the website has to say about itself: A timeline of events surrounding the Radical Right's takeover of American politics, focusing on the invasion of Iraq, the 9/11 attacks, and more.

Oil reserves fueling Middle Eastern wars

ADG 8-21-07  When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, then-President Jimmy Carter responded by announcing what became known as the Carter Doctrine, threatening the use of nuclear arms if the Soviet Union should attempt to dominate the Persian Gulf and its oil reserves.
At that time, the United States had no large, conventional forces available in the Middle East to deter Russia, leaving nuclear weapons as the only military means available.

None other than Paul Wolfowitz, who was deputy assistant secretary of defense for regional programs, wrote in 1977: “We... have a vital and growing stake in the Persian Gulf region because of our need for Persian Gulf oil and because of events in the Persian Gulf affect the Arab-Israeli conflict....” Thus the Carter Doctrine initiated the long shift from Cold War concerns to the preoccupation with the Persian Gulf that would later result in the two wars in Kuwait and invasion of Iraq and now threatens a third war against Iran. The recent refusal of not only George W. Bush, but GOP presidential candidates Mitt Romney and Rudy Giuliani to rule out the use of nuclear weapons in a possible war with Iran seems to bring this long development full circle, and for the same reason: Persian Gulf oil reserves. Not weapons of mass destruction, not nuclear arms in Iraq, not for Iraqi democracy, but in nearly seven years about 4,000 American troops have died for Persian Gulf oil reserves. Hasten the day when Bush and his cronies are gone.

JAMES E. WOOD  Friendship
(from Larry W) [Dick: The Democrats must be changed too. It was the Carter doctrine. (Yet Carter tried to start the US toward alternative energy.) The ruinous US empire for oil foreign policy has been bipartisan. The Democrats as well as the Republicans must be compelled to end oil dependency by creating a new crash Manhattan Project for sustainable fuels and efficiency. Yes?]

HUMAN AND RESOURCES COSTS

Dabashi, Hamid. Iran: A People Interrrupted. New Press, 2007. “the only way that [the U.S.] can help promote democracy... is by first and foremost restoring and safeguarding it in their own country.”

The Iraq War is costing the American Treasury and American tax-payers roughly $4,000 per second. Care to see the total cost thus far? Click here.

What the Iraq war is costing Arkansas:

Arkansas -$4.3 billion thus far and additional $1.4 billion for '08 funding, if the current request is granted by the likes of Boozman and Mark Pryor, Ark's ante will be $5.7 billion see it on a state by state chart http://www.nationalpriorities.org/Publications/More-War-Funding-Requested-3.html

Anyone running against either Boozman or Pryor will hopefully make use of this. (keep in mind our share is on the installment plan, so is everyone else's and likely a big Balloon payment down the road. LW)

Iraq War Budget Jumps for 2008

By Julian E. Barnes, The Los Angeles Times Saturday 22 September 2007

Bush plans to increase his request to nearly $200 billion. The troop buildup and new gear are the main reasons.

Washington—After smothering efforts by war critics in Congress to drastically cut U.S. troop levels in Iraq, President Bush plans to ask lawmakers next week to approve another massive spending measure - totaling nearly $200 billion - to fund the war through next year, Pentagon officials said.
If Bush's spending request is approved, 2008 will be the most expensive year of the Iraq war. U.S. war costs have continued to grow because of the additional combat forces sent to Iraq this year and because of efforts to quickly ramp up production of new technology, such as mine-resistant trucks designed to protect troops from roadside bombs. The new trucks can cost three to six times as much as an armored Humvee.

The Bush administration said earlier this year that it probably would need $147.5 billion for 2008, but Pentagon officials now say that and $47 billion more will be required. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates and other officials are to formally present the full request at a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing Wednesday.

The funding means that war costs are projected to grow even as the number of deployed combat troops begins a gradual decline starting in December. Spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is to rise from $173 billion this year to about $195 billion in fiscal 2008, which begins Oct. 1. When costs of CIA operations and embassy expenses are added, the war in Iraq currently costs taxpayers about $12 billion a month, said Winslow T. Wheeler, a former Republican congressional budget aide who is a senior fellow at the Center for Defense Information in Washington.

"Everybody predicts declines, but they haven't occurred, and 2008 will be higher than 2007," Wheeler said. "It all depends on what happens in Iraq, but thus far it has continued to get bloodier and more expensive. Everyone says we are going to turn the corner here, but the corner has not been turned."

In 2004, the two conflicts together cost $94 billion; in 2005, they cost $108 billion; in 2006, $122 billion.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are financed through a single administration request to Congress, and their costs are combined in the legislation.

The new spending request is likely to push the cumulative cost of the war in Iraq alone through 2008 past the $600-billion mark - more than the Korean War and nearly as much as the Vietnam War, based on estimates by government budget officials.

**Opposition**

After the defeat this week of Democratic proposals to force faster troop withdrawals from Iraq, the new funding request presents a potential target for war critics on Capitol Hill.

"Now that we have a Democratic Congress and the war is less popular and we are not talking about $100 billion a year but $200 billion a year - some of which is not directly war-related - the question is whether the Congress will slim it down," said Steven M. Kosiak, vice president of budget studies at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

Despite setbacks, the staunchest war opponents on Capitol Hill are pushing for new limits.

This week, Sen. Russell D. Feingold (D-Wis.) unsuccessfully proposed cutting funding by next summer for most military operations in Iraq. In the House, antiwar lawmakers have gathered 80 signatures on a letter they plan to send to Bush expressing their opposition to "appropriating any additional funds for U.S. military operations in Iraq other than a time-bound, safe redeployment."

But Republicans continue to oppose such funding limitations. And it is unlikely that any funding cut could win a majority in either chamber. Feingold's proposal garnered only 28 votes Thursday, as 20 Democrats joined 49 Republicans and one independent to quash it.

"The additional funding is so closely tied to the safety of U.S. troops, the Democrats are unwilling to challenge it, even though it is a potential point of leverage for forcing a drawdown," said Loren B. Thompson, a military analyst with the Lexington Institute think tank.

The Bush administration's initial estimate of 2008 costs, released in February, did not include money for the troop buildup.

The military needs additional money to continue the deployment of those forces, which are due to withdraw between December and July.

Still, military budget analysts said that just a fraction of $47 billion would go to support the additional forces. The bulk of the money would be spent on better armor, weapons systems and fixing the materiel ground down by the punishing environment of Iraq.

Kosiak estimates about $15 billion of the new request would be used to cover the additional troops. "They don't want to just replace what was worn out and destroyed, they want to get better stuff, and get more stuff in some cases," he said……
WASHINGTON -- President Bush has no better friends than the spineless Democratic congressional leadership and the party's leading presidential candidates when it comes to his failing Iraq policy. Those Democrats seem to have forgotten that the American people want U.S. troops out of Iraq, especially since Bush still cannot give a credible reason for attacking Iraq after nearly five years of war.

Last week at a debate in Hanover, N.H., the leading Democratic presidential candidates sang from the same songbook: Sens. Hillary Clinton of New York, and Barack Obama of Illinois and former North Carolina Sen. John Edwards refused to promise to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq by 2013, at the end of the first term of their hypothetical presidencies. Can you believe it?

When the question was put to Clinton, she reverted to her usual cautious equivocation, saying: "It is very difficult to know what we're going to be inheriting."

Obama dodged, too: "I think it would be irresponsible" to say what he would do as president.

Edwards, on whom hopes were riding to show some independence, replied to the question: "I cannot make that commitment."

They have left the voters little choice with those answers.

Some supporters were outraged at the obfuscation by the Democratic front-runners.

On the other hand, New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, Rep. Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, and Sen. Joe Biden, D-Del., are more definitive in their calls for quick troop withdrawals.

But Biden wants to break up Iraq into three provinces along religious and ethnic lines. In other words, Balkanize Iraq.

To have major Democratic backing to stay the course in Iraq added up to good news for Bush.

Now comes a surprising Clinton fan.

President Bush told Bill Sammon -- Washington Examiner correspondent and author of a new book titled "The Evangelical President" -- that Clinton will beat Obama for the Democratic presidential nomination because she is a "formidable candidate" and better known.

Sammon says Bush revealed that he has been sending messages to Clinton to urge her to "maintain some political wiggle room in your campaign rhetoric about Iraq."

The author said Bush contends that whoever inherits the White House will be faced with a potential vacuum in Iraq and "will begin to understand the need to continue to support the young democracy."

Bush ought to know about campaign rhetoric. Remember how he ridiculed "nation building" in the 2000 presidential campaign? Now he claims he is trying to spread democracy throughout the Middle East.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is another Democratic leader who has empowered Bush's war.

Pelosi removed a provision from the most recent war-funding bill that would have required Bush to seek the permission of Congress before launching any attack on Iran. Her spokesman gave the lame excuse that she didn't like the wording of the provision. More likely, she bowed to political pressure.

Is it any wonder the Democrats are faring lower than the president in a Washington Post ABC approval poll? Bush came in at 33 percent and Congress at 29 percent.

Members of Congress seem to have forgotten their constitutional prerogative to declare war; World War II was the last time Congress formally declared war.

Presidents have found other ways to make end runs around the law, mainly by obtaining congressional authorization "to do whatever is necessary" in a crisis involving use of the military. That's the way we got into the Vietnam and Iraq wars.

So what are the leading Democratic White House hopefuls offering? It seems nothing but more war. So where do the voters go who are sick of the Iraqi debacle?

Helen Thomas is a columnist for Hearst Newspapers. E-mail: helent@hearstdc.com.

CLINTON AND BLACKWATER? (from Larry W)

The PR firm run by Mark Penn, Hillary Clinton's top strategist, has a new client: Blackwater. Burson
and its subsidiaries, as I reported in a profile of Hillary's corporate advisors in May, have represented
everyone from union-busters to big tobacco to Ahmad Chalabi. Blackwater represents a new low.


ARKANSAS: LINCOLN AND PRYOR VOTED AGAINST FEINGOLD – REID PROPOSAL TO STOP
FUNDING FOR THE WAR BY NEXT SUMMER, except for money to combat terrorism, protect U.S.
interests, and train Iraqi security forces.  Vote was 68 to 28.  TMN (10-7-07).  Feingold especially is the
Senate’s peace advocate.  He is also running for office at home.  You might wish to thank him (and Harry
Reid).  And Kucinich in the House.  And let Lincoln and Pryor know your disapproval.  You have visited her
office here?

THE FUTURE?
9-10 MORE YEARS?
“Petraeus: victory requires 9-10 more years in Iraq” by Bill Prendergast
Sat Sep 08, 2007 at 09:24:51 PM PDT

"General Petraeus has gone on the record, in advance of his long-awaited September report, and
stated that Iraq cannot be stabilized without nine to ten more years of American warfare in Iraq."


Chris Hedges, “Beyond Disaster"
http://www.truthout.org/docs_2006/080607D.shtml

Chris Hedges writes for Truthdig: "The war in Iraq is about to get worse-much worse. The Democrats' decision to
let the war run its course, while they frantically wash their hands of responsibility, means that it will sputter and
stagger forward until the mission collapses. This will be sudden. The security of the Green Zone, our imperial city,
will be increasingly breached. Command and control will disintegrate. And we will back out of Iraq humiliated and
defeated. But this will not be the end of the conflict. It will, in fact, signal a phase of the war far deadlier and more
dangerous to American interests."

WITHDRAWAL
LEAVING IRAQ: KUCINICH’S HR 1234
“THE WAY OUT OF IRAQ”

There is growing agreement that it is time to get U.S. military forces out of Iraq. But Democrats as well as
Republicans must address the issue of what comes next. The main issue is not about when to pull the forces out
but about how to do it so that the existing chaos does not get even worse. Failure to address that issue keeps
Democrats trapped into continuing support for U.S. forces.

The requisite answer is embodied in Congressman Dennis Kucinich's neglected bill HR 1234, a bill which
is being supported by St. Louis area Congressman Lacy Clay (MO-1) among others. The administration should
announce a time 6-10 months in the future when all U.S. military forces will be pulled out of Iraq. At the same
time it should invite the United Nations to send in an order-maintaining peacekeeping force which ideally
would contain a predominance of peacekeepers from mainly Islam countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia.
Such a move would remove the concern of many Muslims about "infidel" military forces in Iraq. Since the
governments of those Muslim countries very much want to prevent increased conflict between Sunnis and Shias
in their own countries, they are likely to exert maximum effort to control it in Iraq. At the same time this
country could use the resources presently being spent on our military to support the U.N. peacekeepers and to
help rebuild the Iraq economy.

Why is this sensible proposal incorporated in HR 1234 not getting more attention, especially from those of
both parties supporting withdrawal of U.S. military forces?

Ronald Glossop, 8894 Berkay Ave., Jennings MO 63136, phone 314/869-2303.
Professor Emeritus, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville,

Here is link.
Military Families Speak Out (MFSO) has a Midwest chapter which includes Missouri and Oklahoma. Main MFSO website - http://mfso.org/
MFSO Missouri/Midwest chapter website - http://www.mfsomissouri.org/
The MFSO Missouri/Midwest chapter website says "If you have an immediate need call Stacy Hafley- Chapter Head 573-303-1203 (573 is the area code for Jefferson City/Columbia, Missouri
I also pasted the Military Families Speak Out Talking Points and attached them to this email.
MFSO description from http://mfso.org/

Military Families Speak Out is an organization of people opposed to the war in Iraq who have relatives or loved ones currently in the military or who have served in the military since the buildup to the Iraq war in fall of 2002. Our membership currently includes over 3,700 military families, with new families joining daily. If you have family members or loved ones in the military and you are opposed to this war, you can JOIN them sending us an e-mail at mfso at mfso.org

Military Families Speak Out Talking Points
“Funding the War is Killing Our Troops” – updated 9-8-07
• Funding the war is killing our troops. Until Congress acts by cutting off funding for the war in Iraq, the war will continue. The Bush administration has made it clear that they have no intention of ending the war and bringing our troops home. Congress is again preparing to vote on a war funding package for the 2008 fiscal year. A vote by a 50% plus one majority of just one branch of Congress would end the funding for the war. Bush could veto anything Congress passes, however if Congress refuses to fund the war, a Presidential veto would not result in funds to continue the war.
• None of the other measures that have been proposed in Congress will end the war, including bills with timelines, or bills to “de-authorize” the war. Most courts have ruled that Congressional funding for a war is the same as authorizing a war, and Congress has voted many times in the past to fund this war. In order for legislation with withdrawal timelines to pass, there would need to be a two-thirds majority vote in both houses of Congress to override a Presidential veto. The resolutions and guidelines that many in Congress are proposing are designed to make these politicians look good to a nation calling for an end to this war, as we come into election time. They will not bring the war to an end. Congress’s power to end the war lies in its ability to end the funding, which will force the President bring our troops home.
• The human toll of the war in Iraq is unacceptable – and growing. Every day that the U.S. military occupation of Iraq continues, an average of three U.S. troops and countless Iraqi children, women and men die. Those who have already fallen in this war will best be honored by a nation and a Congress with the courage to end the war.
• The US military occupation is hurting, not helping, the Iraqi people. There is chaos and civil war in Iraq now. The U.S. military occupation of Iraq is not the solution, it is the problem. It is a major source of the violence in Iraq. The Iraqi people in overwhelming numbers have expressed a desire for the U.S. military occupation to end. The majority of Iraqis in a recent poll stated that the presence of U.S. forces is making Iraq less secure, not more secure.
• What the US owes Iraq cannot be accomplished with a military occupation. The U.S. has a responsibility to contribute financially to the re-building of Iraq. But that responsibility can not be carried out by a U.S. military occupying force or by entities like Halliburton.
• The Bush Administration has never actually supported our troops. Our troops were sent off to a war based on lies, and were sent without proper armor, equipment and supplies. The administration has never allocated sufficient monies to provide the medical and psychological support our troops need when the come home.
• Show REAL support for the troops - Bring Them Home Now. The Bush administration has consistently tried to equate support for the war with support for the troops, and funding for the war with funding for the troops. No one in Congress has been brave enough to challenge this, even as they criticize the administration for mismanagement of the war. The administration has accused all who oppose the war and continued funding of the war of being unsupportive of our troops. But keeping our troops in a war that should not be happening is the most unsupportive thing that anyone can do. Ending funding for a war that is causing so much death and destruction, both physical and psychological; and fully funding a safe and orderly withdrawal from Iraq, and the care they need when they get home, is the best way to support our troops.
March 12, 2007 – The Union for Reform Judaism’s Executive Committee today overwhelmingly adopted a resolution opposing the escalation in troops in the War in Iraq and calling on President Bush to set and announce a specific timetable for the phased withdrawal of troops.

The vote of the 80-member Executive Committee, which includes representatives of the 900 Reform congregations and all affiliate bodies of the Movement, came 15 months after the Reform Movement’s vote to urge the President to begin the phased withdrawal of troops.

“As the largest of the Jewish denominations in North America, we are aware of the weight of our voice,” said Robert Heller, chairman of the Union’s Board of Trustees. “Today’s decision was reached only after thoughtful deliberation and due consideration of the complex issues involved,” he said. “I do know that this Executive Committee acted in the best tradition of Reform Judaism, in keeping with our prophetic obligation to speak truth to power.”

Jane Wishner, chair of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, which brought the resolution to the Executive Committee for its consideration, said the new resolution affirms and builds upon the resolution adopted by the General Assembly at the Reform Movement’s 2005 convention and applies it to current circumstances. Today the Union remains the only major North American Jewish organization to speak out against the war.

“The situation in Iraq is deteriorating rapidly. There’s escalating violence, and there’s no end in sight,” she said, explaining why it was necessary to act at this juncture. “It is clear that the administration has no exit strategy and that it will not develop one except in the context of a specific timetable for withdrawal.”

The Commission adopted its resolution in January of 2007. In advance of today’s Executive Committee meeting, the Union circulated that resolution to the leaders of all member congregations and encouraged them to hold discussions with their members on the war. It also urged them to share their concerns and thoughts with the Executive Committee, and created a public Web site (www.rac.org/iraq) where the resolution and other information were posted and individuals could post their thoughts.

Hundreds of responses were received from rabbis, congregational officers and individuals representing many perspectives on the issue. The responses of members of Reform congregations were shared in full with the Executive Committee. A number of recommendations and additions from both supporters and critics were incorporated into the final version of the resolution.

Albert Vorspan, the former director of the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism and an honorary member of the Executive Committee, set the current resolution into the historical context of the Reform Movement’s long record of having addressed the most pressing social justice issues of the 20th century, including the debates that took place over civil rights, the Vietnam War and women’s rights.

“If you look back over the past 50 years, what attracted people to the Reform Movement is that we had the guts to get up to the plate on the moral issues of the day,” Vorspan said. “If this isn’t a moral issue, what is?”

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union, said, “A central principle of Reform Judaism is that the insights of our traditions must be applied to the real problems of our society around us, and that worship and study for Reform Jews always lead to active engagement with the world.”

“That’s why it was important for the Union to take this stand today,” Rabbi Yoffie said. Out of respect for the minority, the Executive Committee added to the resolution a restatement of its view that Union resolutions are not intended to speak for each individual member of our synagogues, but for the North American Movement.

Scaife-Owned Newspaper Calls for Iraq Troop Withdrawal -- Questions Bush’s 'Mental Stability'
By E&P Staff Published: July 16, 2007 3:29 PM ET

NEW YORK The Pittsburgh newspaper owned by conservative billionaire Richard Mellon Scaife yesterday called the Bush administration’s plans to stay the course in Iraq a "prescription for American suicide."
The editorial in the Tribune-Review added, "And quite frankly, during last Thursday's news conference, when George Bush started blathering about 'sometimes the decisions you make and the consequences don't enable you to be loved,' we had to question his mental stability."

It continued: "President Bush warns that U.S. withdrawal would risk 'mass killings on a horrific scale.' What do we have today, sir? "If the president won't do the right thing and end this war, the people must. The House has voted to withdraw combat troops from Iraq by April. The Senate must follow suit. "Our brave troops should take great pride that they rid Iraq of Saddam Hussein. And they should have no shame in leaving Iraq. For it will not be, in any way, an exercise in tail-tucking and running. "America has done its job.
"It's time for the Iraqis to do theirs." The editorial said it agrees with its local congressman on this: Democratic U.S. Rep. John Murtha. Scaife has been a loyal backer of Republican politicians and many conservative causes, and funded a network of investigations into President Clinton during the 1990s.

Related Stories:
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Who Is to Blame for Bad Behavior By U.S. Troops?

"NO END IN SIGHT" FILM,  why IMMEDIATE troop withdrawl is necessary
"No End in Sight" is a film about how we were led into war and more than 3,000 American lives and hundreds of thousands of other lives were destroyed. The subjects now feel that American policy in Iraq was flawed from the start, that obvious measures were not taken, that sane advice was disregarded, that lies were told and believed, and that advice from people on the ground was overruled by a cabal of neo-con goofballs who seemed to form a wall around the president?
http://democracyrising.us/content/view/1023/164/

HELPFUL WEB SITE: To keep up to date on the news from Iraq and Capitol Hill visit www.DemocracyRising.US
Kevin Zeese, Executive Director, Democracy Rising
The Democracy Rising peace project seeks to bring the troops home and end the occupation of Iraq.

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