VICTORY?

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IRAQ RALLY FRIDAY MARCH 19, 5:30, TOWN CENTER
U.S. Senate Candidate to Lead Peace Prayer on War Anniversary

Fayetteville, AR – On Friday March 19, 2010 from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in front of the Fayetteville Town Center at 15 West Mountain Street, U.S. Senate candidate John Gray will lead a Peace Prayer rally to commemorate the seventh anniversary of the Iraq War.

The purpose of this peace rally is to raise awareness about the ongoing imperative to end the Iraq War and all US wars immediately. Given the extreme economic conditions America is facing, it is an urgent matter of national security that the trillions of dollars being wasted for Middle East wars be rapidly diverted to more intelligent investment. War is one of the worst economic investments a nation can make, and spending instead on jobs, education, healthcare, transportation and clean energy infrastructure here at home would be far wiser uses for taxpayer money.

Additionally, the Middle East wars are making us less safe for other reasons as well. One of the causes of terrorism is the American government’s violent foreign policy history in the region, and the violent occupations are exacerbating the problem, not solving it. We are actually creating far more hatred and terrorists than existed prior to the wars, and ending the wars will stem the tide of anti-American hatred and help us all move toward peace.

Contact: Abel Tomlinson
John Gray for U.S. Senate, Campaign Assistant
(479) 799-1492

AZIZ VISITS MARCH 29
Dr Barbara Nimri Aziz will give a talk, "Can We Bomb Knowledge? The Case of Iraq," on Monday, March 29 at 3:30 pm in Giffels Auditorium, Old Main University of Arkansas
On our very first day back after Spring Break, Barbara Nimri Aziz is visiting our campus to talk about the state of culture, writing, art, in Iraq, where she has spent a lot of time on the ground over the last 15 years.  -Mohja

ps She is a New York community activist /warrior woman / radio goddess from third-gen immigrant working class stock

Dr Aziz is the author of Swimming Up the Tigris: Real Life Encounters with Iraq. Aziz’ awards include research grants from The American Philosophical Society, Wenner Gren Foundation, National Geographic, NEH, NSF, SSRC and most recently, a Fulbright Scholar award. For years, she has hosted a weekly radio program on Pacific-WBAI Radio NYC and www.RadioTahrir.org. In 1992 Aziz founded the Radius of Arab American Writers Inc. (www.rawi.org) and was RAWI’s director until 2005.

Her visit is sponsored by the Middle East Studies Program and the Department of English.

GOOD NEWS: PRESIDENT OBAMA RENEWS COMMITMENT TO WITHDRAWAL  3-10
Dear Friends,
Many thanks to more than 1400 of you who took the time to email the White House last week asking President Obama know that we expect him to keep his commitment to withdraw all combat troops from Iraq by August 31.

In addition to your emails, AFSC and nineteen other national organizations from across the political spectrum sent a letter to the White House. We called for a clear message that withdrawal from Iraq would not waiver from the August 31 timeline. This clarification was necessary after troubling signals to the contrary from Defense Department officials in recent weeks, saying that troop withdrawal may be tied to the military's analysis of the conditions in Iraq.

On Sunday afternoon President Obama gave the sort of assurance we were asking for. He reiterated the U.S. commitment to withdraw combat troops by August 31 and to withdraw all troops and military presence by the end of 2011 in accordance with the bilateral agreement.

We have thanked our contacts at the White House for this clear message, and expressed hope that in the days ahead the White House will take every opportunity to underscore the unconditional nature of this commitment.

We thank all of you who joined us in sending this message. It’s nice to see such immediate results once in a while!

For your information, here are the remarks by the President on the Elections in Iraq:

Wage Peace, Peter Lems and Mary Zerkel

BUT THE PRESIDENT STILL NEEDS OUR SUPPORT: MARCH 20 DEMONSTRATION IN DC

Dear Dick,

Next week, we approach the 7th anniversary of the Iraq War. As we look forward to the mass demonstration on March 20th, Cindy Sheehan kicks off Peace of the Action in the nation’s capital.

For those of you coming to Washington, D.C., for March 20th, come early and stay longer. Peace of the Action will be an ongoing effort of
civil resistance in the capital that is "the boldest and bravest action" for peace.

The goal is to "clog Washington, D.C., every week day through diffuse Civil Resistance (CR) actions to...tamper with 'business as usual' in the capital of the United States of America." If anti-war activists support this effort, it could have a dramatic effect on Congress's blind support for war. Come to the Washington Monument on March 20th and visit Camp OUT NOW, headquarters for Peace of the Action.

In addition to civil resistance, Peace of the Action will be an educational effort. There will be nightly anti-war forums as well as training sessions for people participating in actions.

I'm honored to be kicking off the forum series at 7:30 PM on Monday, March 15th, with a discussion of the economic impact of war and weapons spending. Speaking with me will be one of the nation's leading health care reform advocates, Margaret Flowers, M.D., who will discuss the relationships between health care and war. Other speakers in the first week include former CIA analyst Ray McGovern, citizen-activist David Swanson, former presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney, and Cindy Sheehan. See the schedule and more about Camp OUT NOW by clicking here.

Please support this effort with your presence and your dollars. You can get involved and donate by visiting www.PeaceOfTheAction.org.

And, please come to Washington, D.C., for the March 20th march against wars and occupations. If you can't make it to Washington there will also be marches in Chicago, San Francisco and Los Angeles. As the Afghanistan war escalates, U.S. military attacks expand into Pakistan, and the withdrawal from Iraq slows to a crawl, it is important for those who oppose war and occupation to show their opposition. So, join us in Washington, D.C. Click here for information about how you can get involved.

This is the time for the anti-war movement to reawaken. Take action to end the current U.S. wars and prevent future wars of aggression. Tell your friends about the Voters for Peace Pledge.

Thank for your participation and please support the efforts of Voters for Peace. Click here to contribute now.

Sincerely,
Kevin Zeese
MONEY WASTED ON IRAQ WAR
Rob Simpson, *What We Could Have Done with the Money: 50 Ways to Spend the Trillion Dollars We’ve Spent on Iraq.* 2008.

"Iraq Policy: D"
http://www.fpif.org/articles/iraq_policy_d
By Bonnie Bricker and Adil E. Shamoo, Foreign Policy in Focus, posted February 5, 2010

WAS THE SURGE SUCCESSFUL? NO (William Blum)
They don't always use the word "surge", but that's what they mean. Our admirable leaders and our mainstream media that love to interview them would like us to believe that escalation of the war in Afghanistan is in effect a "surge", like the one in Iraq which, they believe, has proven so successful. But the reality of the surge in Iraq was nothing like its promotional campaign. To the extent that there has been a reduction in violence in Iraq (now down to a level that virtually any other society in the world would find horrible and intolerable, including Iraqi society before the US invasion and occupation), we must keep in mind the following summary of how and why it "succeeded":

- Thanks to America's lovely little war, there are many millions of Iraqis either dead, wounded, crippled, homebound or otherwise physically limited, internally displaced, in foreign exile, or in bursting American and Iraqi prisons. Many others have been so traumatized that they are concerned simply for their own survival. Thus, a huge number of potential victims and killers has been markedly reduced.
- Extensive ethnic cleansing has taken place: Sunnis and Shiites are now living much more than before in their own special enclaves, with entire neighborhoods surrounded by high concrete walls and strict security checkpoints; violence of the sectarian type has accordingly gone down.
- In the face of numerous "improvised explosive devices" on the roads, US soldiers venture out a lot less, so the violence against them has been sharply down. It should be kept in mind that insurgent attacks on American forces following the invasion of 2003 is how the Iraqi violence all began in the first place.
- For a long period, the US military was paying insurgents (or "former insurgents") to not attack...
The powerful Shiite leader Muqtada al-Sadr declared a unilateral cease-fire for his militia, including attacks against US troops, that was in effect for an extended period; this was totally unconnected to the surge.

We should never forget that Iraqi society has been destroyed. The people of that unhappy land have lost everything — their homes, their schools, their neighborhoods, their mosques, their jobs, their careers, their professionals, their health care, their legal system, their women's rights, their religious tolerance, their security, their friends, their families, their past, their present, their future, their lives. But they do have their surge.

Anti-Empire Report, December 9, 2009
http://www.killinghope.org/bblum6/aer76.html

Ronald J. Glasser, M.D.  Wounded: Vietnam to Iraq

The Wounded Keep the Death Count Low
The real "body count" of this war is not only our dead, but our wounded. The real risk to our troops is no longer the numbers of dead but the numbers ending up on orthopedic wards and neurosurgical units.

“Americans who believe that the human cost of Iraq can be measured primarily by body bags, need to read ‘Wounded: Vietnam to Iraq.’”
—Michael Arnold Glueck, New Wounds, Orange County Business Journal, April 24, 2006

A War of Disabilities
For most soldiers, the war doesn't end with the playing of taps. The tens of thousands of wounded are rarely heard and as a result, as pointed out in the recent Washington Post articles on the lack of adequate care at Walter Reed and in the current government hearings, these casualties are not getting the help they need.

Those not returned to duty within a week number (excluding PTSD) now number over fifty thousand.
Amputations are well over eight percent of those wounded—numbers not seen since our Civil War.
The number of traumatic head injuries is well over thirty percent of those wounded.
Physical injuries combined with TBI and PTSD puts the number of casualties at well over a hundred thousand and those numbers are growing.
The ultimate cost of this war has been calculated to be over 600 billion dollars for disability benefits and another 700 billion for medical care for the wounded and injured…and those numbers grow each day.

The Revealing Book
Best-selling author, Ronald J. Glasser, M.D., offers in his newest work, Wounded: Vietnam to Iraq (George Braziller), an unflinching investigation into the frightening injuries to our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and the military and medical innovations that made this a war of
CARE FOR THE WOUNDED
NYT, July 25, 2008 , Editorial

A. Wounded Warriors, Empty Promises
The bad news about the Army’s treatment of wounded soldiers keeps coming. The generals keep apologizing and insisting that things are getting better, but they are not.

The latest low moment for Army brass came on Tuesday in Washington, where a subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee held a hearing to examine the sorry state of the Army Medical Action Plan. That’s the plan to prevent the kind of systematic neglect and mistreatment exposed by The Washington Post last year at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center……..

Among other things, the Army failed to anticipate a flood of wounded soldiers. Some transition units have been overwhelmed and are thus severely understaffed. At Fort Hood, Tex., last month, staff members found 1,362 patients in a unit authorized for 649 — and more than 350 on a waiting list. Of the total, 311 were identified as being at high risk of drug overdose, suicide or other dangerous behavior. There were 38 nurse case managers when there should have been 74. Some soldiers have had to languish two months to a year before the Army decided what to do with them, far longer than the goal the Army set last year……..

The nation’s responsibility to care for the wounded from Iraq and Afghanistan will extend for decades. After Tuesday’s hearing, we are left pondering the simple questions asked at the outset by Representative Susan Davis, the California Democrat who is chairwoman of the military personnel subcommittee: Why did the Army fail to adequately staff its warrior transition units? Why did it fail to predict the surge in demand? And why did it take visits from a Congressional subcommittee to prod the Army into recognizing and promising — yet again — to fix the problem?


INV ASION, OCCUPATION DESTRUCTION OF IRAQ July 2, 2009

Dear Dick,

Across the United States, Americans will be firing up barbecues on July 4th to celebrate our Independence Day, when the yoke of an exploitative colonial occupation was thrown off. (We won't, of course, be talking about what the founding of this new nation meant for the increasingly dispossessed and oppressed Native American nations.)

On June 30th, dubbed "National Sovereignty Day" by Iraq's U.S.-installed government, Iraqis celebrated the milestone of U.S. troops ending their patrols of Iraqi city streets. While this small step towards limiting the occupation, the fulfillment of one of President Obama's promises, is a move in the right direction, can Iraq truly be called a "sovereign country" as 130,000 troops still remain in bases in and around the cities and while U.S. commanders are reportedly preparing for a presence in Iraq for another 15-20 years?

Please read Janet Weil's important essay, "Moving Chess Pieces: The Illusion of Withdrawal in Iraq" to learn how the Pentagon is using loopholes to keep troops and military contractors in Iraq long after the June 30th withdrawal date. Please also read Jodie Evans' powerful piece, "Iraq: What We Leave as We Withdraw" to get a sense of the chaos and suffering that our occupation has wrought.
Over the holiday weekend, share both of these essays with friends and family to help them understand the painful--and continuing--impact of our involvement in Iraq. You can also help spread the word and educate your friends and community by tweeting or changing your Facebook Status.

Here are some suggestions:
134,000 troops and 132,000 contractors. #remindobama the withdrawal still has a long way to go! http://bit.ly/16ZxKn
As the US troops begin to withdraw from Iraq cities, we leave a broken country and people http://bit.ly/11R7Wf #remindobama via @codepinkalert
If you are planning to bring a peace message to your local parade or picnic add your event to our calendar here or email us your plans! Only when all our troops leave Iraq and when the Iraqi people have sovereignty over their nation's resources will the occupation be truly over. And even then, our debt to Iraq will not be paid for the incalculable harm caused by the U.S. invasion and occupation. Celebrating the peacemakers, Blaine, Dana, Desiree, Farida, Gael, Gayle, Janet, Jean, Jodie, Medea, Nancy K, Nancy M, Paris, Rae and Stacy

WITHDRAWAL?

October 23, 2008

Final Text of Iraq Pact Reveals a US Debacle

by Gareth Porter

KILLING CIVILIANS

Hedges, Chris and Laila Al-Arian. Collateral Damage: America’s War Against Iraqi Civilians. Nation Books, 2008. www.collateraldamageiraq.com Devastating expose of an unplanned military occupation becoming lethal to the people there, daily life become terrifying. Here are the true consequences of the war that the White House-Pentagon-Corporate-Congress-Mainstream Media unleashed in Iraq.

Anti-Empire Report, July 4, 2008
http://killinghope.org/aer59.htm

“Condor,” McClellan, and Oil

By Bernard Weiner

Sidney Pollack, Scott McClellan, And The Wars For Oil

How the film director’s "Three Days of the Condor" and McLellan's insider memoir of duplicity in the White House, merge at the vector point of oil politics, especially with regard to the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

B.

SATURDAY 28 JUNE 2008

It Was Oil, All Along

by: Bill Moyers and Michael Winship, truthout | Perspective

jUNE 28, 2008 Bill Moyers. (Photo: Peter Krogh / AP)
Oh, no, they told us, Iraq isn't a war about oil. That's cynical and simplistic, they said. It's about terror and al-Qaeda and toppling a dictator and spreading democracy and protecting ourselves from weapons of mass destruction. But one by one, these concocted rationales went up in smoke, fire and ashes. And now the bottom line turns out to be ... the bottom line. It is about oil.

Alan Greenspan said so last fall. The former chairman of the Federal Reserve, safely out of office, confessed in his memoir, "Everyone knows: the Iraq war is largely about oil." He elaborated in an interview with The Washington Post's Bob Woodward, "If Saddam Hussein had been head of Iraq and there was no oil under those sands, our response to him would not have been as strong as it was in the first Gulf War."

Remember, also, that soon after the invasion, Donald Rumsfeld's deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, told the press that war was our only strategic choice. "We had virtually no economic options with Iraq," he explained, "because the country floats on a sea of oil."

Shades of Daniel Plainview, the monstrous petroleum tycoon in the movie, "There Will Be Blood." Half-mad, he exclaims, "There's a whole ocean of oil under our feet!" then adds, "No one can get at it except for me!"

No wonder American troops only guarded the Ministries of Oil and the Interior in Baghdad, even as looters pillaged museums of their priceless antiquities. They were making sure no one could get at the oil except ... guess who?

Here's a recent headline in The New York Times: "Deals With Iraq Are Set to Bring Oil Giants Back." Read on: "Four western companies are in the final stages of negotiations this month on contracts that will return them to Iraq, 36 years after losing their oil concession to nationalization as Saddam Hussein rose to power."

There you have it. After a long exile, Exxon Mobil, Shell, Total and BP are back in Iraq. And on the wings of no-bid contracts - that's right, sweetheart deals like those given Halliburton, KBR and Blackwater. The kind of deals you get only if you have friends in high places. And these war profiteers have friends in very high places.

Let's go back a few years to the 1990's, when private citizen Dick Cheney was running Halliburton, the big energy supplier. That's when he told the oil industry that, "By 2010 we will need on the order of an additional fifty million barrels a day. So where is the oil going to come from? While many regions of the world offer great oil opportunities, the Middle East, with two-thirds of the world's oil and the lowest cost, is still where the prize ultimately lies."

Fast forward to Cheney's first heady days in the White House. The oil industry and other energy conglomerates were handed backdoor keys to the White House, and their CEO's and lobbyists were trooping in and out for meetings with their old pal, now Vice President Cheney. The meetings were secret, conducted under tight security, but as we reported five years ago, among the documents that turned up from some of those meetings were maps of oil fields in Iraq - and a list of companies who wanted access to them. The conservative group Judicial Watch and the Sierra Club filed suit to try to find out who attended the meetings and what was discussed, but the White House fought all the way to the Supreme Court to keep the press and public from learning the whole truth.

Think about it. These secret meetings took place six months before 9/11, two years before Bush and Cheney invaded Iraq. We still don't know what they were about. What we know is that this is the oil industry that's enjoying swollen profits these days. It would be laughable if it weren't so painful to remember that their erstwhile cheerleader for invading Iraq - the press mogul Rupert Murdoch - once said that a successful war there would bring us $20-a-barrel oil. The last time we looked, it was more than $140 a barrel. Where are you, Rupert, when the facts need checking and the predictions are revisited?

At a Congressional hearing this week, James Hansen, the NASA climate scientist who exactly twenty years ago alerted Congress and the world to the dangers of global warming, compared the chief executives of Big Oil to the tobacco moguls who denied that nicotine is addictive or that there's a link
between smoking and cancer. Hansen, whom the administration has tried again and again to silence, said these barons of black gold should be tried for committing crimes against humanity and nature in opposing efforts to deal with global warming.

Perhaps those sweetheart deals in Iraq should be added to his proposed indictments. They have been purchased at a very high price. Four thousand American soldiers dead, tens of thousands permanently wounded, hundreds of thousands of dead and crippled Iraqis plus five million displaced, and a cost that will mount into trillions of dollars. The political analyst Kevin Phillips says America has become little more than an "energy protection force," doing anything to gain access to expensive fuel without regard to the lives of others or the earth itself. One thinks again of Daniel Plainview in "There Will Be Blood." His lust for oil came at the price of his son and his soul.

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Bill Moyers is managing editor and Michael Winship is senior writer of the weekly public affairs program Bill Moyers Journal, which airs Friday nights on PBS. Check local airtimes or comment at The Moyers Blog at www.pbs.org/moyers.

Editor's Note: This Bill Moyers comment on America's oil policy was presented on Friday 27 June 2008 on Bill Moyers Journal. Other portions of the program can be viewed here TO/vh

PREVENTING WARS: REVIEW OF Lessons from Iraq (from Gladys)

“On Iraq: Wiping Out the Legend” by Maya Schenwar, t r u t h o u t |

More than five years into the Iraq war, it's time to figure out how to prevent future wars like it, according to the authors of "Lessons >From Iraq." (Photo: Rick Loomis / The Los Angeles Times)

A new book from Foreign Policy in Focus explains what made the Iraq war possible, and how we can stop the factors that precipitated it before they breed.

"We can't move on. The damage done by this war has to be examined if it is to be repaired."- Miriam Pemberton, editor of "Lessons From Iraq: Avoiding the Next War"

A silent mythos is enveloping the liberal consciousness in the waning days of the Bush presidency.

It spins like this: When it comes to Iraq, Americans' one reassurance is that this war can't possibly be repeated, not now that we've watched its consequences play out and caught a glimpse of the deception that caused it. As a result of Iraq, the logic goes, we will likely elect a new leader who railed against the war from its inception. We'll then shift toward a foreign policy that disavows offensive interventionism. We will make new friendships and repair old ones. We will live in peace.

However, in the forward to "Lessons From Iraq: Avoiding the Next War," a collection of essays from the progressive think tank Foreign Policy in Focus, editor Miriam Pemberton warns against such now-we-know-better thinking. She cautions against the oft-uttered mantra surrounding large-scale deeds of evildoing, "Never Again."

"The lessons in this book will not be a guarantee against the next war, even supposing they all took hold," Pemberton writes. "There will be a next war."
I winced as I read that line. I wanted to close the book. But because I also wanted to review it, and because the contributors to "Lessons From Iraq" are smart people, and because - despite all pacifist inclinations - I know that, throughout history, there has always, always been a next war, I kept reading.

If you too are riding the "hope" wave into 2009, holding your breath for a war vaccine, you too should keep reading, and not because your bubble needs bursting. You should keep reading because "Lessons From Iraq" delineates a realistic path along which we can direct our hope. It also teaches us to recognize those other, pernicious species of bubble, to ensure that, when they evolve again, we can burst them before they get too big…………

END IRAQ NEWSLETTER #6