OMNI NEWSLETTER ON IRAQ WAR #10, OCTOBER 18, 2011,
BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE TO REPLACE THE CULTURE OF WAR and
EMPIRE, Dick Bennett, Editor. (We seek a new editor.) (#10, October 18, 2011; #9 August 8, 2011; #8 March 19, 2011; #7, April 29, 2010; #6 March 17, 2010, # 5 June 1, 2008; # 4 April 3, 2008; # 3 March 24, 2008, # 2 Jan. 16, 2008, # 1 Nov. 2, 2007.)
MARCH 19 ANNIVERSARY OF US INVASION OF IRAQ 2003
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Take Action: Urge Your Rep. to Support the Lee Bill
From Just Foreign Policy News, August 12, 2011
Representative Barbara Lee has introduced legislation that would prevent the
Pentagon from keeping thousands of U.S. troops in Iraq by cutting off funds for the war after December 31, 2011. Urge your Representative to co-sponsor the Lee bill.

http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/act/obamaextendsbushwar

RESISTANCE TO OCCUPATION: WWII AND AFGHANISTAN/IRAQ.

By Dick Bennett  October 18, 2011

Why should we end the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq? The facts and experiences of occupation provide sufficient reasons. The occupation possesses the possibility of making people see and feel the consequences of their imperial harms. And we have the ability to be informed, to compare, and on those facts and comparisons, to change.

I am referring to the Nazi occupation of Europe during World War Two and the Resistance by Europeans. During those years US leaders and the public sympathized with the occupied. We admired the resisters who fought back against the Gestapo’s intimidation, midnight arrests, imprisonment without trial, brutalities, and torture: beatings, broken bones, smashed teeth, burnt feet, electric wire to genitals, fingernails pulled out, ice baths, and water-boarding.

In The Shadow War: European Resistance, 1939-1945, Henri Michel gives a detailed analysis of the national parts of the Resistance, showing how it drew its members from all political and social groups throughout Europe. He examines how the Resistance was equipped, organized and recruited, and gives a wealth of information on the varying tactics used in different countries.

Yet despite the diversity within the Resistance, there was unity. It was a pan-European phenomenon rather than a series of separate patriotic movements because the subject
peoples were unified by the passion to rid Europe of this brutal occupier. Not only did the Resistance transcend national boundaries, but it also cut across traditional social and political barriers. In their shared detestation of the foreign occupier, people worked together in ways that otherwise would have been unimagined earlier. A similar unity existed in the political sphere: political parties took second place in the greater struggle.

Compare Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, consider the Pentagon’s struggle to defeat Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) employed by the Resistance in Afghanistan and Iraq. According to a report by Andrew Cockburn, the Pentagon by 2008 had spent “at least $60 billion to combat IEDs” and in 2012 it “plans to spend at least $10.1 billion” more—even though past results have been “dismal.” By May 2007 “nearly 70,000” IEDs had been planted in Iraq by an enemy consisting of “multiple small independent groups” able to adapt rapidly to changed tactics. And many of these groups “were bitterly antagonistic—Shia, Sunni, Al Qaeda, and so forth”—yet they shared information about IED techniques within “days or even hours.” Assassinations of High Value Targets, “the ultimate objective of our entire counter-IED strategy,” also have not worked against IEDs, but have even increased them—in some vicinities “by a lot.”

Despite the immense power of the occupiers, the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, a million of them killed and wounded and several millions displace by the invasions and occupations, have resisted for a combined total of eighteen years. Yet the US corporate-military occupation’s techno-war “keeps the money flowing.”

The question then follows, why do we not sympathize with the Iraqi and Afghan resisters of the US occupations, who share so many similarities to the European Resistance? In his book, *The Occupation: War and Resistance in Iraq*, Patrick Coburn writes: “The US never took on board the deep unpopularity of the occupation among Iraqis….The illegitimacy of the occupation in the eyes of Arab Iraqis…was the most important
political fact in Iraq after the invasion.” Nir Rosen (his most recent book: *Bloodshed of America’s Wars in the Muslim World*) said, “every day was Abu Ghraib when American soldiers routinely traumatized Iraqi families. . . .Iraq’s social fabric has been destroyed and its population decimated. “ Yet US leaders continue the failed policy—ten years occupying Afghanistan, eight years in Iraq—and the Nazis only six years.

Why would not the people despise their occupier? That the US freed the Iraqis from Saddam’s brutal dictatorship, or that we freed the Afghans from Taliban fundamentalism, makes little difference, when we replaced those tyrannies with our own as the new Warlord. The Afghan feminist Malalai Joya (*A Woman Among Warlords*) rejects bloody rule whether Afghan or US. People don’t want a foreign power telling them what to do-- threatening, displacing, torturing, killing.

Nor is it crucial that their resistance is tinged with xenophobia, as Michel describes for the European Resistance, “the instinctive aversion to the presence of the foreigner, particularly in a position of superiority” (245). The experience of occupation intensified that resentment to white heat in the majority. And the misery increased in every country, in France and Iraq, Poland and Afghanistan. The US applied Shock and Awe I in the First Gulf War to Baghdad and the Highway of Death in 1991, and then bombed the country for ten years until its electrical and public health systems were so severely damaged that, according to UNICEF, half a million children died.

Nor does it matter that US forces in Iraq have moved mainly to bastions outside the cities. Too many Iraqis or their relatives or friends have been killed, tortured, wounded, intimidated, and humiliated for them to accept us. Our leaders have labeled the Afghan resistance the Taliban, but they are the families and clans of the Pashtun tribe, the major ethnic group of Afghanistan and of Western Pakistan. They are tyrannical fundamentalists, and many brutally patriarchal, and they do not like our house searches. But they brought
social order and immensely reduced corruption by driving out the warlords and stopping the 
opium industry, while the US kicks down doors at night, bombs and machine guns, and 
assassinates by drones, despite numerous--often denied by the occupier, never counted--
civilian casualties. The Big Warlord, Ms. Joya writes.

We fought WWII to rescue occupied people. So let us leave Afghanistan and Iraq, whose 
people are so abused by the most powerful military in the world.

The "Shadow Army" Michel labels the European Resistance, “chained, gagged and 
tortured” though it was, would not give up until the occupier was driven out Similarly there is 
in Iraq and Afghanistan “an inexhaustible reservoir [for resistance] provided by an entire 
population of accomplices.” That was hyperbole for Europe as it is for Iraq and Afghanistan, 
for the statement omits the many collaborators (well-surveyed by Michel), but it is basically 
true for Europe and for Iraq and Afghanistan, as poll after poll has shown. They want us 
out. They want an end to the constant fear and insecurity of the occupier’s terror, the 
“merciless cruelty,” the “torture, shootings, summary executions and the destruction of farms 
and villages,” as Michel describes Nazi occupation (p. 9)

Let us leave with the guilt of our wrongs, but let that guilt enable us to leave with 
compassion. Let us recognize the devastation of the twenty years of war against the Iraqis. 
Let us not walk away from the Afghans as we did after we had assisted them to expel the 
Soviets. Rather, let us provide individual Iraqis and Afghans reparations enough to enable 
them at least to begin to restore their lives at least materially. Water and sewage systems 
destroyed, five million displaced Iraqis. A million Iraqis and Afghans killed. Let these 
countless wrongs not be our only legacy in Iraq and Afghanistan.

*As reported by Jane Adas in The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs 
(September/October 2011) p. 74.
A. Pew Study: Only A Third Of Veterans Who Joined After 9/11 Say Iraq And Afghanistan Were Worth Fighting

Kyle Leighton | October 5, 2011, 12:17PM

Military service, Pew, Polls, Veterans

In a wide-ranging study surveying US veterans, the Pew Research Center documented the attitudes of service members who were involved in the conflicts associated with the War On Terror over the last ten years and those who served before it.

The study unpacked data on veterans' perception of their missions abroad and their effectiveness, as well as their lives since returning to the US. The overarching perception seems to contain a disconnect between service members who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and those who served in previous wars: those from the post-9/11 era are more likely to report difficulty in re-entry to civilian life.

Pew surveyed over 1,800 US service members, over a third of which served during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the major results within the data was just how down veterans were on US involvement in those two countries.

"Veterans are more supportive than the general public of U.S. military efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq," reads the Pew report. "Even so, they are ambivalent. Just half of all post-9/11 veterans say that, given the costs and benefits to the U.S., the war in Afghanistan has been worth fighting. A smaller share (44%) says the war in Iraq has been worth it. Only one-third (34%) say both wars have been worth fighting, and a nearly identical share (33%) say neither has been worth the costs."

Beyond post-9/11 veterans' view of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they are also more likely to have a harder time re-entering life back in the US. They are nearly twice as likely to say their readjustment was "difficult," and almost half of respondents who served in the post-9/11 era said they experienced strained relationships with family. 47 percent also said that they had frequent outbursts of anger.


KUCINICH’S OPPOSITION TO THE WAR CONTINUES

“A War Based on Lies”

Dear Friend,

Nine years ago this country went down a path that has been calamitous for our people, for our soldiers, and for the Iraqi civilians. I led the effort then to oppose the Iraq war resolution, and I also investigated the supposed reasons we were told this war was necessary. We found that there was no proof that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction nor the capability of attacking the United States of America. In short, the war in Iraq was based on lies.

Nine years later, over a millions innocent Iraqis lost their lives, thousands of U.S. troops who love this country sacrificed their lives, tens of thousands of troops were injured, and we have spent over $3 trillion of our tax dollars.
I recorded the following video to explain what's happened and what we need to do to set a new direction - one that protects America by protecting our way of life with jobs and healthcare: www.kucinich.us

With your support, we'll continue to challenge the war first mentality that wastes lives and money while we need so much investment here at home. I will continue to be the voice of truth and justice in our Congress.

Let's set America in a new direction.

With respect, Dennis Kucinich

“The Iraq War Isn’t Over”

Phyllis Bennis, Op-Ed, NationofChange, Sept. 25, 2011: “With so much attention and so many billions of our tax dollars shifting from Iraq to the devastating and ever more expensive war in Afghanistan, it’s too easy to forget that there are still almost 50,000 U.S. troops occupying Iraq. We’re still paying almost $50 billion just this year for the Iraq War. And while we don't hear about it very often, too many Iraqis are still being killed.” READ | DISCUSS | SHARE http://www.nationofchange.org/iraq-war-isnt-over-1316963202

AMAZING ANTI-WAR SPEECH BY WAR VETERAN
Watch this before it disappears!!!
|Sue Skidmore to MPC
It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a sick society.
- J Krishnamurthi
http://www.youtube.com/user/ThePhaedrus83#p/u/0/akm3nYN8aG8
From: Barbara Bakie Sent: Saturday, August 13, 2011
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=akm3nYN8aG8

100 poets against the war

Salt Publishing launched '100 poets against the war' on 5 March at The Poetry Society. All profits go to Amnesty International. You can buy it via Blackwell's USA and UK or Amazon in the UK, US or Canada. The details are: '100 poets against the war', Salt Publishing, ISBN: 1 876857 98 6. Cost: £9.95 (UK), $13.95 (US), $27.95 (Aus).
World poets against the war
100 Poets against the war, 100 Poets against the war redux and 100 Poets against the war 3.0 were designed to be printed off, copied double-sided and distributed as chapbooks. All the contributors donated their poems and we encouraged readers to download and share the books. There were readings from Seattle to Oxford.

'100 Poets against the war' was perhaps the speediest world poetry anthology ever - one week from start to finish (27 January). '100 poets against the war redux', its second edition, contained many new poems, so complemented rather than replaced the original. The third edition, '100 Poets against the war 3.0', which followed one week later, also contained magnificent new poems. (You'll need Adobe Acrobat - a free download - to read them.)

'100 poets' is the result of grassroots activism. All profits from the printed book go to Amnesty International, and the online versions are free.

It Would Be Violent if We Left Iraq?
08/17/2011 by Peter Hart, FAIR
A headline and subhead in the Los Angeles Times:

Iraq attacks raise new concerns about U.S. pullout
Suicide bombings, car explosions and gunfire that killed at least 70 in an apparently coordinated assault suggest Iraqi forces may be overwhelmed by insurgents after American troops withdraw.

Of course, these attacks happened while U.S. troops are still in the country-- making the point about the U.S. "pullout" somewhat hard to follow.

But this is a familiar argument. Remember the Time magazine cover photo of a disfigured Afghan woman last July? The magazine's political point was summed up by the text on the cover: "What Happens If We Leave Afghanistan." The attack that left her disfigured happened with U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

The implication in both cases is that violence will overcome these countries due to the absence of U.S. troops-- which obviously obscures the fact that the U.S. presence is often the source of such violence, or the justification used by armed groups seeking to drive out U.S. troops.

To Live Within Our Means, Let's Leave Iraq Like We Promised
From Just Foreign Policy News, August 12, 2011

While Washington wallows in debt hysteria, the Pentagon tries to keep 10,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq indefinitely. Some Members of Congress have a different idea: let's leave Iraq in December, when we promised to do so.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-naiman/to-live-within-our-means-
We Meant Well
How I Helped Lose the Battle for the Hearts and Minds of the Iraqi People by Peter Van Buren

From a State Department insider, the first book recounting our misguided efforts to rebuild Iraq—a shocking and rollicking true-life cross between Catch-22 and The Ugly American

Read more about We Meant Well  http://americanempireproject.com/

END OF IIRAQ WAR NEWSLETTER #10