

The Occupation Project

Background Information

January 27, 2007

Why cut off further funding for the war?

The administration is moving full-steam ahead. George Bush said this week that he is the “decision-maker” with regard to Iraq. What we know, however, is that he will **pursue a reckless military path** despite the nearly unanimous consensus that the hellish nightmare in Iraq requires **an aggressive political solution**, not more firepower.

When asked about a Senate resolution opposing an increase in troops, Dick Cheney said bluntly, **“It won't stop us.** We are moving forward. The Congress has control over the purse strings. They have the right, obviously, if they want, to cut off funding.”

When Nancy Pelosi says that Democrats will never vote to cut off funds while U.S. troops are in harm's way, she and most other lawmakers of both parties obscure the reality of our plans for a long-term occupation of Iraq.

Additional funds for the war in Iraq will support the occupation, not our troops. Don't let Congress hide behind the troops as they escalate the war.

Here are a few of the ways further war funding will be used:

- Polls show a large and growing **majority of Iraqis want coalition forces to leave Iraq beginning immediately.** Adequate funds for the safe and expeditious withdrawal of all U.S. troops have already been appropriated and are in the pipeline. Further funds will only be used to escalate the war and prolong the occupation against the wishes of the Iraqi people.
- “As many retired American military officers now admit, Iraq has become, since the invasion, the primary **recruiting and training ground for terrorists.** The longer American troops remain in Iraq, the more recruits will flood the ranks of those who oppose America not only in Iraq but elsewhere.” (McGovern-Polk) Further war funding, therefore, only fuels the fires that have been set burning.
- Iraqis overwhelmingly believe that the U.S. intends to keep **permanent bases** in Iraq. In fact, despite official denials, five massive bases are under construction or already complete. The **Balad Air Base**, forty miles north of Baghdad, has a miniature golf course, 2 PXs, a Pizza Hut, a Burger King, and a jail. Another, under construction at **al-Asad**, covers more than thirteen square miles. The Iraq Study Group quietly envisions at least **70,000 troops remaining on bases in Iraq indefinitely.** New funds will go directly to the construction and maintenance of permanent

bases that stand as a daily reminder to Iraqis of the hated U.S. occupation. Leaders of both parties keep Americans in the dark about our true long-term intentions.

- We are constructing the **largest U.S. embassy in the world** on a 110-acre, highly fortified site in the heart of Baghdad. In a war-ravaged country with a shattered infrastructure, the construction of our embassy is the only project that is on schedule, a grim testimony to the real meaning of our commitment to “reconstruction.” Further war funding will not support the troops but will be used to **staff a 1000-person embassy** from which we will manage the indefinite occupation. Why don't we hear about this?
- Iraqis believe the U.S. intends to maintain **permanent control over Iraq's oil resources**. The Iraq Study Group report confirms that belief when it talks of commercializing and privatizing Iraq's oil industry. New laws being debated in the Iraqi Parliament will allow the multinational oil giants unfettered access to and control over Iraqi oil resources for the next thirty years, an arrangement that is unprecedented anywhere else in the world. Will we allow our leaders to use further war funding to build a protection network for Big Oil?

Increasingly bellicose threats aimed at Iran are coming from all directions, including leading Democrats. Don't let further funding mean a new war with Iran.

- George Bush denies any plans for a military attack on Iran. “That we want to expand this beyond the borders [is] a presumption that simply is not accurate. We believe that we can solve our problems with Iran diplomatically, and are working to do that.” But he then adds, “The choice is the Iranian government's choice...” in language ominously reminiscent of the lead up to the Shock and Awe attack on Iraq in 2003 when we were told it was “Saddam's choice.” Further war funding makes it easier for the administration to launch an attack on Iran.
- **Seventy-five percent of Americans want** this country to pursue a path of **diplomatic engagement with Iran**, yet the administration continues to threaten Iran, refusing to take anything “off the table.” John Edwards was among several presidential hopefuls addressing an Israeli security conference at Herzliya this week. “Iran must know that the world won't back down,” said Edwards. **“All options must remain on the table,”** when dealing with Iran, whose nuclear ambition, he said, “threatens the security of Israel and the entire world.” Approving additional war funding now will give the administration the resources it needs to attack Iran without any further public involvement or authorization.
- A senior British military source said January 24th that the **Israelis were serious about the use of military force to stop Iran**, and were now engaged in preparing public opinion for such a prospect. “They're watering the turf. The Iranians are not under enough pressure,” the

source said. Speaking at the same Herzliya conference, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, **"We can stand up against nuclear threats and even prevent them."** Israeli military officials warned this week that Israel—acting alone or in coordination with the US—could launch preemptive military **strikes against Iran before the end of this year.**

- "The pieces are moving," says military strategist Colonel Sam Gardiner. **"They'll be in place by the end of February.** The United States will be able to escalate military operations against Iran. The second carrier strike group leaves the U.S. west coast on January 16. It will be joined by naval mine clearing assets from both the United States and the UK. Patriot missile defense systems have also been ordered to deploy to the Gulf." Is this all bluster? "Maybe there are no plans to take Iran to the next level," says Gardiner. **"The fuel for a fire is in place, however.** All we need is a spark." Handing the administration another \$100 billion is the equivalent of striking the match.

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