

What Are the Real Reasons for the War in Iraq?

The working class knows that the war is not worth the money or lives being spent on it. In addition to the 1,900 American lives lost, thousands upon thousands of Iraqis have been killed, maimed and left homeless. All the official explanations for the war in Iraq have been exposed as lies – there are no weapons of mass destruction, there was no link between the 9/11 terrorists and Iraq, Saddam Hussein posed no imminent threat to any other nation. The Bush administration has lost all credibility, all political authority.

There are plenty of explanations and slogans offered by anti-war activists about the causes of the war. At today's demonstration you will hear speaker after speaker berate you with variations on the following:
It's a war for oil. It's the result of corporate greed. No blood for oil!
It's a policy error. It's a mistake.
It's a Republican war.
It's an irrational policy of a reactionary faction of the ruling class.

It's the fault of the stupidity and ineptitude of George W. Bush, who can never acknowledge a mistake.

Whatever kernels of truth exist in each of these explanations, they all obscure the reality that the war in Iraq is the inevitable consequence of a globally decomposing capitalist system and the increasing difficulty of US imperialism to maintain its hegemony in an increasingly chaotic world.

In 1989, when Russian imperialism collapsed and the cold war came to an end, the politicians and the capitalist media promised us a new world order, a future of peace, prosperity, and democracy. Billions of dollars previously spent on the arms race would be transferred to social programs and the world would be a better place. Fifteen years later the new world order has become a new world chaos. There is no peace, no prosperity, and the forces of state repression and dictatorship are on the rise. The Cold War, with its disciplined blocs, led respectively by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. superpowers, where secondary and tertiary powers subordinated their interests to those of the bloc, looks increasingly like the "good old days" for the world capitalist class. The collapse of Russian imperialism was a pyrrhic victory for American imperialism, more a reflection of the decomposition of the global capitalist system than a triumph for American power. With the collapse of the blocs, the glue that kept the lesser powers in line disappeared, and every country more and more began pursuing its own imperialist interests, "every man (or nation) for itself," producing a situation of increasing chaos on the international terrain.

In 1992, U.S. imperialism officially adopted the strategic goal of preventing the rise of any rival bloc or rival power in Europe and Asia so that it would remain the only superpower in the world and this goal has guided U.S. foreign policy ever since, whether Republicans or Democrats have occupied the White House. It is this strategy which explains U.S. imperialism's increasing number of military

excursions throughout the world – to send a warning and block any potential rival, including America's onetime allies, to remind them that the U.S. is the only superpower in the world. The U.S. invasion of Iraq was not a greedy attempt to boost oil profits for U.S. corporations – far more has been and will be spent on the war and occupation of Iraq than will ever be compensated for by Iraqi oil production. It's not a policy error, or the result of Republican or Bush administration stupidity, but a conscious decision supported by all factions of the ruling class, except for the extreme rightwing isolationists. The invasion of Iraq was the lynchpin in the American geopolitical strategy to keep European imperialisms from making inroads in the Middle East. Coupled with the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and new American alliances with former Soviet republics in Central Asia and the Caucasus, it meant growing U.S. control of one of the most strategically important areas in the world.

For the ruling class the real problem with the war in Iraq is that the greatest military machine in the history of the world is now bogged down in a quagmire, and is increasingly unable to unleash necessary military operations in other imperialist theatres. This would have happened no matter who was president, because it is a central characteristic of capitalist decomposition that every action that American imperialism takes to improve its situation only winds up exacerbating the problems even more. However, the Bush administration's clumsiness and ineptitude both on the level of the propaganda and ideological explanation for the war (the Democrats prefer justifying military interventions on the basis of human rights) and the squandering of the considerable "patriotic" sentiment that followed the 9/11 attacks, and its tactical handling of the invasion on the ground has made things even more of a mess. The deteriorating military situation and growing unpopularity of the war raises serious problems for the ruling class because it makes it increasingly difficult for the U.S. to have available fresh, deployable troops or to drum up support for further military ventures which are a vital necessity to defend U.S. imperialist interests.

Since this war and all the wars that capitalism has in store for us in the years ahead are inexorably linked to capitalism's drive to survive, to maintain a world of exploitation and profit, the way to end war is not to change policies, or to change presidents, but for the working class to change the world, to understand its historic responsibilities and potential, to develop the consciousness and unity necessary to destroy capitalism and consign it to the historic rubbish pile, and replace it with a society based on the fulfillment of human need and the construction of a genuine human community – a workers' revolution..

–Internationalism, September 24, 2005

(Internationalism is the U.S. section of the International Communist Current, POB 288, NY, NY 10018)

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