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A US exit strategy from Iraq

⊗ **A poverty of choices** - a conversation with Abbas K. Kadhim
Right now, you do not want to be in George Bush's shoes.

⊗ **No exit** - by Danielle Pletka & Molly McKew
Neither Bremer nor his people had any genuine interest in the credibility of the Iraqi
Governing Council.

⊗ **Stop digging** - by Frederic C. Hof
Such a transfer of authority would even vest in the government of Iraq the authority
to order the evacuation of foreign forces.

⊗ **Bold steps required** - a conversation with Hisham Ahmed
For every Iraqi killed by the occupation armies, a new wave of anger is created.

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A poverty of choices

a conversation with Abbas K. Kadhim

BI: How would you characterize the situation in Iraq today?

Kadhim: It is a situation with fewer options for the occupying force and for the
occupied people. That is usual in most cases of occupation. Things are not controllable
because there are so many variables. More or less, the United States is choosing its
type of poison.

BI: If the decision were made tomorrow to get out, would that be the best choice?

Kadhim: Getting out of Iraq has one big virtue and that is that it guarantees that the

political stroke on sovereignty, one providing the people of Iraq the promise of a responsible, respectful American exit. Surely it is time to stop digging.-*Published 6/5/2004 © bitterlemons-international.org*

Frederic C. Hof is CEO of AALC, Ltd., a Virginia-based international business consulting firm. He directed field operations in Jerusalem for the Mitchell Committee in early 2001. He is a retired Army officer and Vietnam veteran.

Bold steps required

a conversation with Hisham Ahmed

BI: In what ways has the United States failed in Iraq?

Ahmed: The United States and the western alliance made many claims to further their goals. Most notable was the claim that the war was necessary to deal with weapons of mass destruction. Sooner or later, it was discovered that this was a falsification of facts on the ground in order to legitimate the war.

Secondly, the United States and its allies had advanced the notion that they went to Iraq in order to liberate the Iraqi people from the grip of a tyrant: Hitler reincarnated. But the practices that the United States itself has conducted in Iraq have dispelled that notion.

There was a great deal of coverage in the media about the finding of underground mass graves of those killed by Saddam Hussein in the southern and central regions of the country. This issue was meant to drive the war and give it legitimacy. But the more information that is disclosed about how the United States and Britain are treating Iraqis in prison and at home, Iraqis today--even those who welcomed the occupying army--might say that the occupation forces have contributed its own mass graves, above ground.

BI: What have been the implications of the war for the United States?

Ahmed: The Bush administration from the outset has created a variety of international crises, the magnitude of which has never before been seen. This administration hastened to deepen enmity against the United States in many parts of the world where hitherto that was not the case.

Also, while George Bush Sr. may have thought he had succeeded in kicking the Vietnam syndrome once and for all, it is abundantly clear that his son has revived the Vietnam syndrome vis-a-vis the human and other losses in Iraq.

BI: So what can the United States do now?

Ahmed: In the sense of American culture, values and stature internationally, the bold step of withdrawing from Iraq should be taken sooner rather than later. Because it will happen down the road anyway. The US experience in Vietnam, Somalia and Lebanon is telling. Why risk so many lives in order to support a few oil companies and interest groups in the United States? The letter sent several days ago by 62 experienced diplomats signifies the importance and urgency of taking a bold step today.

BI: What kind of wisdom can you lend the Americans from Palestine's history and the Israeli occupation?

Ahmed: Occupation, no matter how one may try to beautify it, is the worst thing for a people. It cripples every aspect of life. For the Bush administration to try to comfort

itself that liberating the Iraqi people and "spreading democracy and human rights" will justify the occupation will not do any good.

The more oppression by the Israeli occupation, the more resistance and determination by the Palestinian people. For every Iraqi killed by the occupation armies, a new wave of anger is created. Iraq, which was previously not known as hostile to the United States in the conventional sense of the term, may now turn otherwise.

There has to be a very bold move very soon before frustration becomes endemic.-
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