

OMNI SPECIAL NEWSLETTER #3 ON IRAQ

March 24, 2008, BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE TO REPLACE THE CULTURE OF WAR,
Dick Bennett, Editor

ON MARCH 22, THE PENTAGON ANNOUNCED THE 4000TH SOLDIER KILLED IN THE 5 YEARS OF THE IRAQI WAR. On March 25, OMNI will remember these soldiers and all the victims of the war crime aggression by the US against Iraq. (Actually, the Pentagon count of US soldiers killed in the war is far fewer than the truth. See the new *The Three Trillion Dollar War*.)

WHY DID THE PEACE MOVEMENT OPPOSE THE IRAQ WAR AND OTHER WARS? One reason: We believed our institutions of democracy, freedom, the Bill of Rights, representative government and balance of powers, social and legal justice, habeas corpus, economic opportunity would win hearts and minds. Our leaders and the public that followed them believed Iraq had to be compelled by armed violence and the US freedoms has to be circumscribed. See below for some of the consequences.

See OMNI's web site www.omnicenter.org for the beginnings of OMNI's Campaign Against War. Your participation is invited.

Contents:

CAUSES OF THE WAR

GOP Neocons

Lying

Complicit Press Coverage

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

3 Trillion Dollars

Loss of Jobs

Class War

Violence Against Women

Iraq Civilian Casualties

LEAVING IRAQ

Get Out of Iraq: Shalom Center

Defunding the War Video

Rejecting Permanent Bases

(This past weekend both Clinton and especially Obama have urged ending the occupation and leaving Iraq. McCain strongly supported the occupation and claimed victory ahead.)

SENATOR LINCOLN (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371.

Fayetteville office: 251-1380

Senator Mark Pryor: Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908

CONGRESSMAN Boozman: Lowell office: 479-725-0400.

DC address: 1708 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515; 202-225-4301.

CAUSES OF THE WAR

GOP NEO-CONS FOR CONQUEST

Piper, Michael. *The High Priests of War: The Secret History of How America's Neo-Conservatives Came to Power and Orchestrated the War in*

Iraq as the First Step in Their Drive for Global Empire.

US LEADERS' LIES CATALOGUED

A complete debunking on all of the Bush/Cheney/Rumsfeld lies for going to war is clearly presented, organized and sourced at the following site:

http://www.leadingtowar.com/abuses_misuses.php

(from Darrell H via Larry W)

LYING TO START A WAR A WAR CRIME

False statements preceded war

http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20080123/ap_on_go_pr_wh/misinformation_study_12

(from Steve S)

PRESS COVERAGE OF THE PREPARATION FOR THE WAR

"Buying the War" 2007-04-25, PBS

<http://www.pbs.org/moyers/journal/btw/watch.html>

Four years ago on May 1, President Bush landed on the aircraft carrier USS Lincoln wearing a flight suit ... in front of a giant "Mission Accomplished" banner. He was hailed by media stars as a "breathtaking" example of presidential leadership in toppling Saddam Hussein. **Despite profound questions over the failure to locate weapons of mass destruction and the increasing violence in Baghdad, many in the press confirmed the White House's claim that the war was won. How did the mainstream press get it so wrong?** How did the evidence disputing the existence of weapons of mass destruction and the link between Saddam Hussein to 9-11 continue to go largely unreported? In the run-up to war, skepticism was a rarity among journalists inside the Beltway. The [PBS "Buying the War"] program analyzes the stream of unchecked information from administration sources and Iraqi defectors to the mainstream print and broadcast press. While almost all the claims would eventually prove to be false, the drumbeat of misinformation about WMDs went virtually unchallenged by the media. **"Buying the War" examines the press coverage in the lead-up to the war as evidence of a paradigm shift in the role of journalists in democracy** and asks, four years after the invasion, what's changed? "More and more the media become ... common carriers of administration statements," says the Washington Post's Walter Pincus. "We've sort of given up being independent on our own."

Note: You can view the highly revealing documentary "Buying the War" or read the transcript at the link above.

COERCING ALLIES

--Munoz, Heraldo. *A Solitary War: A Diplomat's Chronicle of the Iraq War and Its Lessons*. In the months leading up to the U.S.-led invasion of [Iraq](#), the Bush administration threatened trade reprisals against friendly countries who withheld their support, spied on its allies, and pressed for the recall of [U.N.](#) envoys that resisted U.S. pressure to endorse the war, according to an upcoming book by a top Chilean diplomat. The rough-and-tumble diplomatic strategy has generated lasting "bitterness" and "deep mistrust" in Washington's relations with allies in [Europe](#), [Latin America](#) and elsewhere, Heraldo Muñoz, [Chile's](#) ambassador to the United Nations, writes in his book.

See preceding newsletters for other causes of the illegal invasion.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR

NOBEL PRIZE WINNER JOSEPH STIGLITZ REVEALS THE TRUE COSTS OF THE THREE TRILLION DOLLAR IRAQ WAR

Iraq War Sticker Shock



INTERVIEW: An iconoclastic economist discusses how the White House cooked the books on its march to war.

Joseph Stiglitz

By Koshlan Mayer-Blackwell, February 21, 2007, *Mother Jones*

Joseph Stiglitz has never shied away from using his platform as a Nobel Prize winner in Economics to point out policy follies in high places. In 2002, after he had left a post as the World Bank's chief economist, he published the bestseller [*Globalization and Its Discontents*](#), in which he took the International Monetary Fund and the Treasury Department to task for their overzealous approach to privatization in Russia and their one-size-fits-all response to the East Asian financial crisis.

Last year, Stiglitz received renewed attention for [a paper](#) [PDF], co-written with Harvard professor of public finance Linda Bilmes that projected that the total economic costs of the Iraq War would exceed a trillion dollars. The hundreds of billions Congress has already approved for the war, they argued, tells only half the story. It doesn't account for, among other things, increases in defense spending, the long-term costs for veterans' health care and disabilities, the lost earning potential of the Americans killed and wounded, and increases in the price of oil.

See their new book: Stiglitz, Joseph and Linda Bilmes. *The Three Trillion Dollars War: The True Costs of the Iraq Conflict*. Interviewed by Amy Goodman on *Democracy Now* 2-29-08.

WAR VS. JOBS

"The Wages of Peace: Spending on the War in Iraq is a Job killer...." By Robert Pollin and Heidi Garrett-Peltier. *The Nation* (March 31, 2008).

CLASS WAR AND SOCIAL DETERIORATION

"The War and the Working Class," *The Nation* (March 31, 2008). Soldiers are treated like workers in a neo-liberal economy. Includes a dramatic chart on the services that could have been provided for the people of Cleveland for the money squandered in Iraq.

FILM ON \$COST\$ OF WAR

Cost of War video gains momentum

AFSC's Cost of War video continues to make online waves as it spreads the word about the outrageous amount of money being spent daily on the Iraq war—at the expense of meeting human needs.

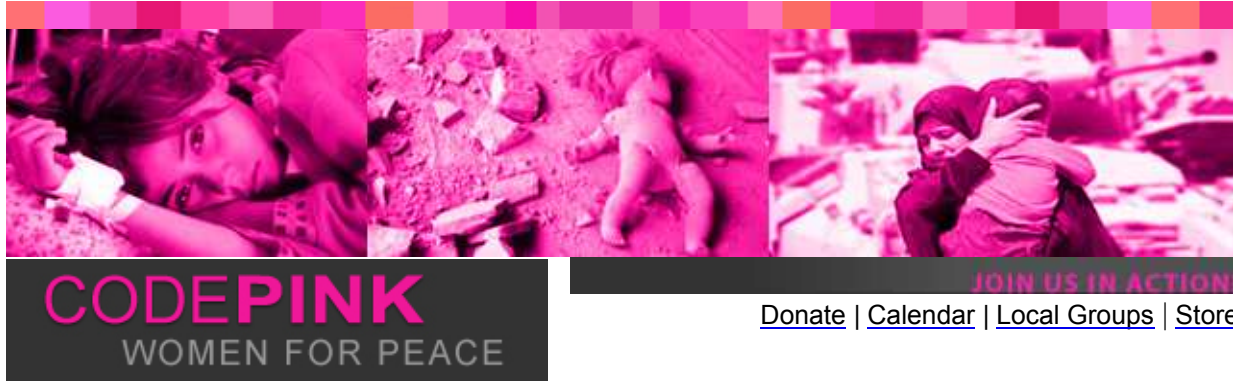
[Keep the momentum going by watching the video and sharing it with your friends >](#)

HUMAN COSTS: CIVILIAN CASUALTIES

Accounts of at least 193 Iraqi civilian casualties caused by US found with this google search. Click on this shortened link.

<http://tinyurl.com/28td8f>

HUMAN COSTS OF IRAQ WAR: WOMEN



March 6, 2008

Dear Dick,

As you read this, women in Iraq live in a Hell we have created.

In Central Iraq, **91.8%** of women polled by **Women for Women International** say that violence against women is increasing. **74.5%** of Iraqi women avoid leaving their homes. **63.2%** have regularly not sent their children to school. **65.3%** report that US security forces are only making security worse. One woman who was interviewed commented, "They gave us freedom and they took from us security" but if I have to choose, I will choose safety and security."

We cannot allow this to continue.

As we gear up to honor International Women's Day on March 8, let us remember the dire situation of our Iraqi sisters. Let us use our voices to make their voices heard.

On March 11, we will deliver a letter to every woman Member of Congress. We will provide them with chilling information about the struggle of Iraqi women living under occupation, and press them to take supportive action in the next few weeks by voting to fund human needs, not warfare, in Iraq, and legislate the return of all the troops and contractors. [Please add your name to our letter here](#). The letter will include the [Women for Women International report on the status of Iraqi women](#). We hope you will read it yourself to learn more about the tragic circumstances they are living in.

If you attend a local International Women's Day event, [please print these sign up sheets](#) and encourage others to sign on to our letter. Fax them to us for delivery on Monday, [310-827-4547](tel:310-827-4547).

You can also honor International Women's Day by joining one of our regional training camps this weekend. [Click here](#) to find an inspiring day of community, creativity, skills-building and inspiration in your area.

In solidarity with women around the world,
Dana, Desiree, Farida, Gael, Gayle, Jodie, Liz, Medea, Nancy and Rae

P.S. These training camps will also serve to get us ready to mobilize for actions on the 5th anniversary of the war, March 18th and 19th. [Click here](#) to find out how to join us to tell Washington we've had **Five Years Too Many** of this devastating war.

SENATOR LINCOLN (202) 224-4843 Fax: (202) 228-1371 .
Fayetteville office: 251-1380

MORE NEW BOOKS ON IRAQ

IRAQ WAR

--Hayden, Tom. *Ending the War in Iraq* (2007). See his essay in *The Nation* (March 10, 2008), "The Old Revolutionaries of Vietnam" about his return to VN in 2007 and questioning the need for the war in the first place.

--Paretsky, Sara. *Bleeding Kansas*. Novel. A subplot is about opposing the Iraq War. Paretsky is the feminist crime novelist famous for her V. I. Warshawski series. See her recent memoir: *Writing in an Age of Silence*.

--Steele, Jonathan. *Defeat: Why the U. S. and Britain Lost Iraq*. Steele interviewed by Amy Goodman 3-13-08. Steele is a journalist with the UK *Guardian*. Example of contents: The chief problem is the occupation. Except for the first month or two, the people wanted our soldiers out, and then the people realized they were not liberated but occupied and the killing rate greater than under Saddam began.

--Hoyt, Mike, John Palattella, and the Staff of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. *Reporting Iraq: An Oral History of the War by the Journalists Who Covered It*. Melville House, 2008.

IRAQ WAR COSTS: Resources, Human, Financial (see: Control of Information)

--Stiglitz, Joseph and Linda Bilmes. *The Three Trillion Dollars War: The True Costs of the Iraq Conflict*. Interviewed by Amy Goodman 2-29-08. Rev. *Columbia Journalism Rev.* March-April 2008). A massive expose of the incompetence, corruption, and waste of money, resources, and lives by the Bush Admin. and the corporations it favored.. The two biggest winners of the war: the oil industry and the military contractors. Mainly financial resources, but significant sections on human costs.

-- *Body of War* (2008) www.bodyofwar.com is an intimate and transformational feature documentary about the true face of war today. Meet Tomas Young, 25 years old, paralyzed from a bullet to his spine - wounded after serving in Iraq for less than a week. *Body of War* is Tomas' coming home story as he evolves into a new person, coming to terms with his disability and finding his own unique and passionate voice against the war. The film is produced and directed by Phil Donahue and Ellen Spiro, and features two original songs by Eddie Vedder. www.bodyofwarmusic.com

You can hear an October 2005 Tell Somebody interview with Tomas Young here:

<http://www.pacificanetwork.org/radio/content/view/276/47/>

--Galatas, Janis. *A Soldier's Courage*. Self-published, 2008 (Amazon). About her husband Norris's recovery from extremely severe wounds.

WE MUST GET OUT OF IRAQ: THE SHALOM CENTER



A Prophetic Voice in Jewish, Multireligious, and American Life

IRAQ IS A DOMESTIC SOCIAL-JUSTICE ISSUE

Even before the US government invaded Iraq, The Shalom Center was warning that the war would have a disastrous impact on American society at home, as well as on our international relations and our security.

Five years later, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz believes the overall costs of the war will reach \$3 trillion - not just the immediate costs to taxpayers but also costs to our country of medical care for a generation of maimed veterans, interest on the immense national debt rolled up to pay for the war, etc. .

"For a fraction of the cost of this war," said Mr. Stiglitz, "we could have put Social Security on a sound footing for the next half-century or more."

Robert Hormats, vice chairman of Goldman Sachs International -- hardly a flaming radical! -- joined Stiglitz in testifying to the war's enormous costs before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee: **The money spent on the war each day is enough to enroll an additional 58,000 children in Head Start for a year, or make a year of college affordable for 160,000 low-income students through Pell Grants, or pay the annual salaries of nearly 11,000 additional border patrol agents or 14,000 more police officers.**

EACH DAY.

(Much of this information about Stiglitz' and Hormats' analysis comes from Bob Herbert's column in the NY Times of March 4, 2008; some from Stiglitz' own writings. Stiglitz and Linda Bilmes have just published a book called *The Three Trillion Dollar War.*)

For of course spending a trillion dollars in Iraq (let alone three trillion) has meant massive shortfalls in desperately needed spending on this side of the water. It also sets up enormous federal deficits for the future, which will keep handcuffing other efforts to heal America. And this war (like most) has also handed much greater power to those who already held great power, and has greatly weakened civil liberties -- not the ingredients of social justice.

So it seems to me that the war will have to end before our country can address the deep needs of healing the wounded earth, creating decent schools, building railroads, feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, treating immigrants and refugees decently.

And out of the history of the ineffective war-ending efforts of the last year, it seems clear that it will take the united efforts of all of us who care about social justice to bring about an end to the war. In the world I know best - the Jewish community -- some social-justice groups have found it possible to address the war as well as domestic concerns: the Progressive Jewish Alliance in California and Jews for Racial and Economic Justice in New York City. PJA condemned the war plans from the beginning, on the basis of the illegality, immorality, wrong-headedness, and likely destructiveness of the war itself, even without examining its impact at home. JFREJ worked its way into opposition to the war by starting from a commitment to local needs of workers and the poor in New York, and then saw how damaging the Iraq war became to any effort to meet those needs.

Three national Jewish organizations have opposed the Iraq war since before the invasion, and three have come to oppose it during the past year or so.

The three veteran opponents are The Shalom Center, *Tikkun* (the magazine; the Tikkun Community did not address Iraq for several years), and the Workmen's Circle/ Arbetering, a venerable heir of the Yiddish-speaking secular socialist tradition which is now in the process of rejuvenating itself, having merged with the magazine Jewish Currents and reached out to a new generation.

The three newer opponents are Ohalah (the Association of Rabbis for Jewish Renewal), the Union for Reform Judaism, and the National Council of Jewish Women.

All six of us are concerned with domestic social justice as well as the war.

Yet some Jewish social-justice organizations are keeping hands off the war. One reason is that they are seeking to avoid dealing with issues involving Israel and US foreign policy that might affect Israel, because they see those issues as "too divisive" among Jews who agree about education, civil liberties, corporate misbehavior, women's rights, gay rights, etc.

They are certainly right that raising the issues most directly related to Israel are indeed likely to bring on shouting matches and worse among their supporters. But at this point, that does not seem likely when the issue is Iraq.

For more than two-thirds of the Jewish community is now convinced that the war was a profound mistake, and wants to end it. There are still disagreements about how swiftly and on what terms, but those could be dealt with in the usual give-and-take of organizational policy-setting. Even if these groups continue to avoid the war, they are doing valuable work. But it seems to me their work could become much more valuable than it is.

For here the bottom line of financial reality really is the bottom line: **Spending one trillion dollars [Stiglitz and Bilmes show it's at least 3 trillion] shows to destroy leaves very little left over to create.**

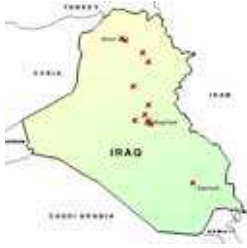
Shalom, salaam, peace - Arthur

The Shalom Center | 6711 Lincoln Drive | Philadelphia, PA 19119

www.shalomctr.org | office@shalomctr.org | 215.844.8494

2-MINUTE VIDEO ON DEFUNDING THE WAR (from Ted S)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wnq6cD5jk1Q>
Defund | Refund Petition
<http://support.afsc.org/site/PageNavigator/DefundRefundPetition>

Iraq: President Rejects Ban on Permanent Bases



For years now the president has insisted the U.S. has no intention of building permanent bases in Iraq. In response to FCNL's campaign, Congress has enacted law after law banning the U.S. from building these bases. Yet on Monday, when Congress sent the president legislation that would again ban permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq, President Bush announced he would [ignore that provision of law](#). The president's decision implies he plans to lock his successor into a long-term occupation of Iraq.

TED's newsletter on ME: "Hawgblawg" my Hawgblawg:
<http://swedenburg.blogspot.com/> For in-depth analysis of the Middle East,
visit Middle East Report On-Line: <http://www.merip.org>
: <http://swedenburg.blogspot.com/> For in-depth analysis of the Middle
East, visit Middle East Report On-Line: <http://www.merip.org>

Dick Bennett
jbennet@uark.edu
(479) 442-4600
2582 Jimmie Ave.
Fayetteville, AR 72703