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Who benefits from escalating chaos in Iraq?

By Rep. Ron Paul

01/05/07 "Information Clearing House" -- -- Saddam Hussein is dead. So are three thousand Americans.

The regime in Iraq has been changed. Yet victory will not be declared: not only does the war go on, it's about to escalate. Obviously the turmoil in Iraq is worse than ever, and most Americans no longer are willing to tolerate the costs, both human and economic, associated with this war.

We have been in Iraq for 45 months. Many more Americans have been killed in Iraq than were killed in the first 45 months of our war in Vietnam. I was in the U.S. Air Force in 1965, and I remember well when President Johnson announced a troop surge in Vietnam to hasten victory. That war went on for another decade, and by the time we finally got out 60,000 Americans had died. God knows we should have gotten out ten years earlier. "Troop surge" meant serious escalation.

The election is over and Americans have spoken. Enough is enough! They want the war ended and our troops brought home. But the opposite likely will occur, with bipartisan support. Up to 50,000 more troops will be sent. The goal no longer is to win, but simply to secure Baghdad! So much has been spent with so little to show for it.

Who possibly benefits from escalating chaos in Iraq? Neoconservatives unabashedly have written about how chaos presents opportunities for promoting their goals. Certainly Osama bin Laden has benefited from the turmoil in Iraq, as have the Iranian Shi'ites who now are better positioned to take control of southern Iraq.

Yes, Saddam Hussein is dead, and only the Sunnis mourn. The Shi'ites and Kurds celebrate his death, as do the Iranians and especially bin Laden – all enemies of Saddam Hussein. We have performed a tremendous service for both bin Laden and Ahmadinejad, and it will cost us plenty. The violent reaction to our complicity in

the execution of Saddam Hussein is yet to come.

Three thousand American military personnel are dead, more than 22,000 are wounded, and tens of thousands will be psychologically traumatized by their tours of duty in Iraq. Little concern is given to the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians killed in this war. We've spent \$400 billion so far, with no end in sight.

This is money we don't have. It is all borrowed from countries like China, that increasingly succeed in the global economy while we drain wealth from our citizens through heavy taxation and insidious inflation. Our manufacturing base is now nearly extinct.

Where the additional U.S. troops in Iraq will come from is anybody's guess. But surely they won't be redeployed from Japan, Korea, or Europe. We at least must pretend that our bankrupt empire is intact. But then again, the Soviet empire appeared intact in 1988.

Some Members of Congress, intent on equitably distributing the suffering among all Americans, want to bring back the draft. Administration officials vehemently deny making any concrete plans for a draft. But why should we believe this? Look what happened when so many believed the reasons given for our preemptive invasion of Iraq.

Selective Service officials admit running a check of their lists of available young men. If the draft is reinstated, we probably will include young women as well to serve the god of "equality." Conscription is slavery, plain and simple. And it was made illegal under the 13th amendment, which prohibits involuntary servitude. One may well be killed as a military draftee, which makes conscription a very dangerous kind of enslavement.

Instead of testing the efficacy of the Selective Service System and sending more troops off to a war we're losing, we ought to revive our love of liberty. We should repeal the Selective Service Act. A free society should never depend on compulsory conscription to defend itself.

We get into trouble by not following the precepts of liberty or obeying the rule of law. Preemptive, undeclared wars fought under false pretenses are a road to disaster. If a full declaration of war by Congress had been demanded as the Constitution requires, this war never would have been fought. If we did not create credit out of thin air as the Constitution prohibits, we never would have convinced taxpayers to support this war directly from their pockets. How long this financial charade can go on is difficult to judge, but when the end comes it will not go unnoticed by any American.

Ron Paul is a Republican Congressman from Texas.

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