

Anti-Imperialist News Service

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**Anti-Imperialist
News Service**

P.O. Box 61870,
Chicago, IL 60680

Phone:
(312) 409-1127

Editorial:

Elections Under U.S. Occupation and Coercion

U. S. government officials, as well as the corporate news media in the U. S., are proclaiming the January 30 elections in Iraq a “victory for democracy” and a “resounding success for the Iraqi people.” President George W. Bush has declared the elections a “great and historical achievement.”

But such statements are designed to hide the truth, throw sand in the peoples eyes, and cover up the reality of the ongoing war in the country. Iraq today remains under foreign military occupation and martial law, and these so-called elections have not in any way advanced Iraqi sovereignty and national independence.

In fact, the elections touted so much by the U.S. occupying powers are not valid under international law. The 1907 Hague Convention, for example, forbids an occupying power from creating permanent changes in the government of the occupied territory. Other international covenants forbid the occupying power to con-

duct an election as the U.S. is doing in Iraq. The reasons are obvious: In conducting the election, the U.S. is violating elemental precepts of a “free and fair” election.

News reports reveal that U.S. military forces used heavy-handed tactics, threats and coercion against the people in order to “get out the vote.” On election day, for example, heavily-armed U.S. troops went door-to-door in many neighborhoods of Baghdad and other cities ordering people out of their homes and to the polling places. Political campaigning and posterage was performed not by Iraqis, but by U.S. soldiers. Millions of dollars were provided to many of the candidates by U.S. corporations and the notorious U.S “National Endowment for Democracy” (NED).

The occupying powers used not only threats and intimidation in order to force people to vote, but also imposed an unprecedented se-

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World Social Forum in Brazil

From January 26-31, the fifth “World Social Forum” was held in Porto Alegre, Brazil.

Under the theme of “Another World is Possible,” people from 140 countries participated in thousands of conferences, workshops, rallies and marches opposing neo-liberalism and the economic dictates of U.S. and European monopolies.

In numerous meetings, trade union activists, members of peasant organizations, environmental groups, etc., discussed opposition to the debt imposed on the developing countries, environmental and human rights issues and many other concerns. Participants this year also called for the total forgiveness of foreign debt owed by the 11 countries hit by the recent earthquake and tsunami that killed so many people.

This year's World Social Forum again emphasized not only opposition to capitalist global-

ization, but also the urgent need to take action against the U.S. war on terrorism and the occupation of Iraq. Over 200,000 people participated in the January 26 rally to mark the beginning of the forum. Another massive march, with tens of thousands of anti-imperialist demonstrators, was held on January 31st to conclude the rally.

For the past five years, this forum has been held as an alternative to the World Economic Forum, an annual summit of capitalist political and business leaders meeting at the Swiss alpine resort of Davos.

After the first World Social Forum, organizers drafted a “Charter of Principles,” which states, in part, “The World Social Forum is an open meeting place for reflective thinking, demo-

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Call for Removal of U.S. Troops from the Philippines

The following statement is reprinted from a recent press release by the Information Bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

CPP Demands Pullout of Clandestine U.S. Troops and Military Advisers

January 26, 2005

The Communist Party of the Philippines today assailed the Arroyo government for allowing American military advisers and combat troops to secretly operate within the Philippines in “direct violation and in an outright mockery of Philippine sovereignty” even as it demanded that the Arroyo government take immediate steps to identify such troops and order their pullout.

CPP spokesperson Gregorio “Ka Roger” Rosal said that the “Bush regime will use any and all pretexts to heighten its military intervention in the Philippines,” with the “puppet Arroyo regime only too willing to allow it and surrender Philippine sovereignty.”

“The Bush and Arroyo governments have collaborated in letting US troops use past joint military exercises and so-called relief operations as covers to secretly position US

military advisers in AFP military camps in Mindanao and within NPA guerrilla zones,” Rosal added.

At the same time, Rosal warned the Bush government and US advisers and combat troops secretly operating in the Philippines against “directly supporting the AFP in its counterrevolutionary war.”

“US military advisers who participate directly in the AFP's war efforts will be regarded as members of an armed adversarial force,” the CPP spokesman said. “The New People's Army is likewise ready to face interventionist US military advisers and troops in the battlefield. We will hold the Bush and Arroyo regimes responsible for the consequences.”

“These US troops indoctrinate Filipino soldiers with the dogma of antiterrorism and train them to kill their fellow Filipinos,” Rosal said. “Under this US dogma, those who oppose oppression and exploitation are blindly labeled as terrorists.”

He called on patriotic-minded officers and soldiers of the AFP to help expose and repudiate the imperialist teachings of these US soldiers.

Rosal also called on the American people to demand the pullout of secret American military advisers in the Philippines.

Rosal reiterated the demand for the immediate abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Mutual Defense Treaty “which have been used by the US to trample on Philippine sovereignty.”

Iraq Elections (from page 1)

ries of police measures during and prior to election day -- including shoot-on-sight curfews, travel restrictions, and a ban on cars. Streets were sealed off by miles of barbed wire, and Apache helicopter gunships flew constantly overhead. While U.S. military commanders stepped-up their war against the “anti-Iraqi insurgency,” local television and radio propaganda labeled all those who opposed the elections as terrorists or “enemies of democracy.”

U. S. officials boast of a large voter turnout, but the truth is that in many regions of Iraq, balloting was made impossible due to ongoing offensive U.S. military operations. In some large cities, such as Fallujah, Ramadi, Sammara, and elsewhere, virtually nobody showed up at the polls.

U. S. imperialism has in fact a long history of organizing fraudulent elections in countries under its occupation and domination. During the last century this tactic was used extensively, such as in Korea, Japan, Vietnam, the Philippines, El Salvador, Nicaragua, etc, etc. Last year, these same “democratic elections” were imposed on the people of Afghanistan. The staging of such elections is not only an obvious absurdity, but also a violation of international law.

No, the elections in Iraq were not held to advance democracy but rather to deceive the people of the world. They were held in order to consolidate and strengthen the U.S. occupation, and “legitimize” those who serve U.S. interests in Iraq.

World Social Forum (from page 1)

cratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and interlinking for effective action, by groups and movements of civil society that are opposed to neo-liberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism.”

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