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On August 19th the last “combat” brigade left Iraq. This took place more than seven years after the original U.S. imperialist invasion of the country by the Bush regime. U.S. propagandists are trumpeting this withdrawal and many Americans believe the war there is all but over. But the reality is that the U.S. occupation and war of terror against the people of Iraq continues.

According to the official U.S. Department of Defense website, the departure of the last “combat” brigade “leaves 56,000 U.S. service members in Iraq.” Those numbers do not count the thousands of employees of the largest U.S. embassy in the world or the tens of thousands of U.S. contractors still there. They also do not count the tens of thousands of troops in the U.S. directed puppet army being trained and advised by the U.S. imperialists.

U.S. State Department spokesman, Philip Crowley declared the latest development a “historic moment.” But then in his next breath he confirmed that “We’re not ending our involvement in Iraq. We will have important work to do. This is a transition. This is not the end of something. It’s a transition to something different. We have a long-term commitment to Iraq.” Translation: The U.S. will continue to occupy and control Iraq.

The Iraqi military is utilizing and dependent on U.S. equipment. It needs not only U.S. equipment and parts, but it also requires U.S. trainers and technicians to function. The most senior army officer in Iraq, Lt. General Babaker Zebari stated last week that his forces would not be ready to take control of Iraqi security until at least 2020.

U.S. propagandists also fail to mention in their latest announcement of the troop withdrawal how much the U.S. invasion has impoverished and devastated Iraq which was once one of the most modern Middle Eastern nations with a relatively high standard of living compared to many of its neighbors.

Basic necessities such as potable water, reliable electricity, garbage pickup, a functioning sewage system, employment, health care, etc. are beyond the reach of the vast majority of Iraqis. Many Iraqis employed by the puppet army take that job because that is the only one they can get. Security is non-existent with the possibility of death ever present. Women are among

the most oppressed in the region as religious leaders and other feudal forces now hold much more power than before the U.S. invasion.

The country is divided by sectarianism. Months after the election, Iraq's politicians can not agree on a government that will collaborate with the U.S. occupiers. Militias still function as independent military forces and are run by warlord politicians. Iran still controls or influences many of the various political factions that exist in the country, and that along with other disputes and contention with the U.S. imperialists, could lead to war between the U.S. and Iran. (Admiral Mike Mullen, one of the top U.S. military leaders, recently stressed that the military options are still on the table in regard to Iran.)

The bottom line is that Thursday's withdrawal of the "combat" brigade is not a "historic moment." It is just one more piece of propaganda and one more step in the continuing U.S. war of terror. In addition to the tens of thousands of troops still in Iraq, tens of thousands of others are nearby either in other Middle East bases or in the waters near Iraq on nuclear task forces. If the U.S. needs to do so it can rapidly reintroduce combat forces within days.

The war and occupation will continue until the people of Iraq and the world force the U.S. to withdraw. People in this country have a particular responsibility to build a powerful movement of determined political opposition to the ongoing occupation of and war upon Iraq waged by the U.S. government. Do not be fooled into thinking that Obama or any presidential administration will leave Iraq on its own volition.