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L564 Ethics

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Should the United States Military Withdraw From Iraq?

The United States public opinion of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the War on Terrorism

is "bring our soldiers home." The public is influenced by the media; mostly because over two

thousand Soldiers have given their lives during Operation Iraqi Freedom and the War on

Terrorism. The American public is right to want our Soldiers to come home and have the killing

stopped, but is it the ethical thing to do?

To solve the ethical dilemma of pulling out of Iraq now or rebuilding the nation and

establishing a competent government, we have only to look at the Gulf War. During Operation

Desert Storm the United States military crushed the Iraqi Military and drove them out of Kuwait

and into central Iraq. The Gulf War was considered a complete success.

The United States military was precise in their warfare, had few casualties, a small

percentage of direct civilian casualties, and destroyed a significant number of Iraqi military

forces. The United States pulled most of their military forces out of Iraq by July 1991.

Comparing the Iraq of July 1991 to the Iraq of April 2003, both post-war, Iraq in 1991 had more

resources remaining. However, as Richard Reid of the United Nations Children's Fund put it, an

entire country was left "brain dead, essentially unmarked, a body with its skin basically intact,

but with every main bone broken and with its joints and tendons cut." (Makiya, 240)

Imagine the aftermath of the Iraq War without the United States military and coalition

forces present to assist in rebuilding the nation. The damage to the infrastructure and the

devastation to health care, water, sewage treatment, and electric power systems turned Iraq into

one of the most impoverished countries. During the post-war period disease and malnutrition were widespread throughout country. One post-war study concluded that the infant and child mortality rate increased 300 percent. This increase is in excess of 46,897 deaths of children under the age of 5 related to the Gulf War. The United States must not repeat the mistakes of the Gulf War. With the post Iraq War the United States military and coalition forces committed to repair the infrastructure of Iraq re-establishing medical facilities, water, sewage and electrical systems. The current United States Administration realizes the obligation to the citizens of Iraq, although the American public does not.

Another lesson learned during the Gulf War to apply to the Iraq War is one of stability. When coalition forces withdrew from Iraq in 1991 the Iraqi military forces crushed Iraqi uprisings, killing over 105,000 people. Kurdish and Shiite refugees fled into the mountains after the failed uprising. "During this historic exodus of more than two million people, Kurds-overwhelmingly children-died at a rate of 450 to 750 a day because of diarrhea, acute respiratory infections, and trauma. In total, probably 25,000 to 30,000 Kurds died." (Makiya, 240)

The Iraq War differs from the Gulf War in that Saddam Husain and his regime are no longer in power, but the country is very unstable. The United States Administration does not want to make the same mistake made during the Gulf War. To leave Iraq without stable form of government, military, and police force would be devastating to the Iraqi people. The United States and its coalition forces are committed to establishing a democratic government where all people are free and equal. For this reason the United States military and coalition forces presence is essential.

Ensuring stability in the Iraqi government is also important to the War on Terrorism. By leaving Saddam Husain in power in 1991 we created a terrorist country. From 1991 to 2003 Saddam Husain continued to produce weapons of mass destruction, provide financial funding to

terrorist organizations, harassed the international community, and abused his own people. With the post Iraq War, the United States and its allies committed to rebuilding the nation. This commitment is directly linked to the mistakes of the Gulf War, the way we ended the war, mistakes that will not be made again.

The media portrays a United States military that is taking horrific casualties in Iraq. Every casualty is important, and we, the Armed Forces mourn every service member lost, but we realize a greater responsibility and are willing pay the ultimate sacrifice for our nation. I returned from Iraq in March of 2005. About one month later I was driving to work thinking about the years ahead of me. I knew that I would attend training at the United States Sergeants Major Academy for nine months, and then after that most likely deploy back to Iraq. I was thinking that I did not want to go back to Iraq. I had missed the birth of my first son, and the first year of his life. I looked up to the back of the school bus in front of me to see a window filled with the faces of smiling children. At that time I realized that I would go back as many times as necessary to ensure that terrorism-terrorists did not come to our soil. I believe that most Armed Service members feel the way that I do, that we must take the fight to the terrorists, and each of us is willing to pay the ultimate sacrifice to protect our nation, and keep the threat away from our families, our children, and our country.

The United States has a moral obligation to remain in Iraq until the nation is rebuilt and stable. Although public opinion is growing against the Iraq War, and the general population wants to bring our soldiers home, our country has an ethical responsibility to remain. We have learned from past wars the error of leaving a nation in ruin, and we will not make the same mistake again.

Works Cited

Kanaan Makiya. *Cruelty and Silence*. First Edition, 1993.