LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

Some Americans, especially Democrats, may have thought that the hypocrisy of the Bush administration—epitomized by the famous “Mission Accomplished” banner before the fighting in Iraq intensified—could not be surpassed. But Obama has done it! By reducing the number of U.S. troops in Iraq to “only” 50,000 and relabeling them “non-combat” (they will, of course, retain all their weaponry, be stationed in U.S. bases that have every appearance of permanency, and be on call to fight), Obama has outdone Bush by proclaiming The End of Combat Operations in Iraq!

The American people are eating it up. Every newscast on U.S. TV is celebrating this great achievement, as reporters fall over one other to interview service members who performed so heroically in killing intransigent Iraqis.

The Iraqis, of course, still don’t have electricity for more than four hours a day, if they have it at all, and many of them lack access to clean drinking water and other basic services, including a decent educaton, while suicide and roadside bombings continue to maim and kill them. But,

hey, they're able to vote, and they've only been without a functioning government for five months so far, while politicians seek to prevail in religious and ethnic conflicts that their "liberation" brought to the fore. Most important, American corporations will be making money from Iraqi oil.

Meanwhile, education in the U.S. continues to deteriorate—with mass layoffs of teachers, terminations of school buses, and pupils being required to bring their own supplies, even toilet paper, to school, where they can, however, in Texas and other leading states, learn that the U.S. was established by god as a Christian nation (Muslims out!), the greatest country the world has ever known. Roads and bridges continue to crumble, pollution of water and air increases, and global warming advances.

Americans die because they can't afford health care and some American children go hungry, while the U.S. Supreme Court expands the rights of corporations and limits those of citizens, and the votes of legislators are bought and sold with increasing openness. But what's to worry? Waging war has become the natural condition of American life, a "new normal" in a catch phrase of our time. How much education does it take to follow orders and, as declared by a recently promoted U.S. general, have fun shooting bad people, especially if one has had adequate religious indoctrination?

And isn't the military a great answer to unemployment among the minimally educated young? (Of course, as daily incidents in U.S. malls, offices, clubs, and schools show, one doesn't have to join the military in order to enjoy shooting people, but in the mililtary you can do it with impunity, even praise.) "Entitlements" such as Social Security and Medicare may have to be cut to support war—since what is spent on it can only be increased—while avoiding taxes on the corporations and their wealthy owners who profit from it. But that's surely a small price to pay for postponing the complete collapse of the U.S. empire. An achievement in Afganistan comparable to that in Iraq may be possible in only ten or so more years. So, Americans, enjoy your iPhones and iPads, the modern equivalents of Nero's fiddle, and on to Iran!

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