



In Debate Over Permanent Bases In Iraq, U.S. Seeks Authorization For War In Iran

[Think Progress](#)

Thursday, June 12, 2008

The ongoing negotiations between Iraqi leaders and the Bush administration over the future role of the military occupation "have turned into [an increasingly acrimonious public debate](#)."

The Bush administration's demand for 58 permanent bases in Iraq — a near doubling of the current 30 bases — are causing Iraqis to warn that the status of forces agreement would be "[more abominable than the occupation](#)." The administration is reportedly holding hostage "[some \\$50bn of Iraq's money](#) in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York to pressure the Iraqi government into signing an agreement."

The reason the White House is so hell-bent on signing a long-term agreement may have less to do with Iraq and more to do with Iran. According to press reports of the ongoing negotiations, the Bush administration is seeking the "[power to determine](#) if a hostile act from another country is aggression against Iraq." Ali al Adeb, a leading member of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa party, confirmed:

The Americans insist so far that is they who define what is an aggression on Iraq and what is democracy inside Iraq...if we come under aggression we should define it and ask for help.

The administration's request would seemingly allow the U.S. to brand Iran as an enemy of Iraq and attack Iran in the name of defending Iraq pursuant to a legal obligation under the status of forces agreement.

Other details from press accounts confirm that the Bush administration has one eye on Iran in the course of its negotiations with Iraqis. The Washington Post explains that the administration is seeking "the prerogative for U.S. forces to conduct operations [without approval from the Iraqi government](#)." Moreover, the U.S. wants control over Iraq's airspace:

The American negotiators also called for continued control over Iraqi airspace and the right to refuel planes in the air, according to [Sami al-Askari, a leading Shiite politician], positions he said **added to concerns that the United States was preparing to use Iraq as a base to attack Iran.**

Since the administration is unlikely to get an Iran war [authorized through Congress](#), it's instead trying to sneak it through [the Iraqi parliament](#).