

# Unfiltered “Voices of Iraq”..... Or Neoconservative, Pro-war Propaganda?

You have just watched a film (or are coming here to see a film) that claims to present “the unfiltered view that only the Iraqis themselves can provide.” The sponsors of the film say, “This is a film about the choices Iraqis desire for themselves.” They also say, “This film is about the people of Iraq, not US politics.”

But with 450 hours of footage shot by the Iraqi subjects of the film, certainly somebody filtered, selected, and edited this footage, and it was not the Iraqi people. To really appreciate and understand what you have just seen, you should know who is sponsoring and promoting this movie: the Iraq-America Freedom Alliance.

The Iraq-America Freedom Alliance (IAFA) is “a coalition of American and Iraqi organizations and individuals committed to fostering goodwill between our nations’ citizens and winning the war on terror.” (from their website [www.untoldiraq.org](http://www.untoldiraq.org)) They do this by “giving voice to Iraqis who are grateful for their newfound freedom and working to secure democracy in their country.” Note that they say nothing about giving voice to those who are not “grateful.” The IAFA sponsors national speaking tours of Iraqis who come here to express their gratitude for the US invasion, and to tell of the wonderful changes that are happening along their path to democracy and freedom. This movie is a natural extension of that program.

The IAFA is listed on the links page of the movie’s website ([www.voicesofiraq.com](http://www.voicesofiraq.com)), along with a number of the organizations it works in partnership with. No anti-occupation groups are listed there.

Clearly the IAFA has a political agenda to push. They believe the US “must not waver in its support for democracy in Iraq.” The real nature of their agenda is clearer when we dig deeper and find that they are, in their words, “a project of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.”

The Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD) is an influential, neoconservative think tank, founded two days after the attacks of 9/11, that has promoted the war in Iraq. They have told all the now-familiar lies: stockpiles of WMD’s, nuclear weapons capabilities, ties between Saddam and al-Qaeda, etc. If you check the current articles on their website ([www.defenddemocracy.org](http://www.defenddemocracy.org)), you can see that they are still trying to defend some of these lies. Now they need to tell new lies to justify an ongoing military occupation.



Occupation: is it about democracy, or is it about control?

The best indication of the purpose of the FDD is a list of some of its leaders:

- Clifford May, President: former Director of Communications for the Republican National Committee.
- Jack Kemp, Chairman of the Board of Directors: Vice-presidential candidate under Dole in 1996.
- Dr. Jeanne Kirkpatrick: UN Ambassador under Reagan.
- Newt Gingrich: Architect of the right-wing takeover of Congress as Speaker of the House.
- R. James Woolsey: The FDD itself describes him as “director of the CIA from 1993 to 1995. He has been a leading neoconservative promoting the war in Iraq.”
- Bill Kristol: Chairman of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), the leading neoconservative think tank that is pushing for US empire.
- Donna Brazile: Campaign manager for Gore 2000. (Yes, they are bipartisan!)
- Richard Perle: former Chair of the Defense Policy Board, a leading architect of neoconservative foreign policy. Member of PNAC. Known in Washington, DC as the “Prince of Darkness”!

So that’s who is behind this innocent-seeming movie! That is whose interests are being served by showing this movie at the Lagoon Theaters. Does that influence the credibility of what you have just seen? (or are about to see?)

Though the actual interviews in the movie are clearly authentic, who selected which ones to show? With people like this in charge, people who have lied repeatedly about the justifications for the war, can we believe that it was done honestly?? Certainly there are some voices included that oppose the occupation – but that is clearly necessary to ensure some modicum of credibility for the overall production. Overall, it is a rather blatant and crude piece of propaganda. If you came here to see a balanced presentation of the situation in Iraq, told by its own people, you will be very disappointed, probably very angry. The people who selected the footage appear to be obsessed with stories about the horrors of living under Saddam, and mostly neglect current problems. Yes, Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who oppressed his people – that’s exactly why the US supported his activities for much of his career. Now Iraq is directly under the control of the US military. Many Iraqis say, “The student has gone, the master has arrived.”

By trying to convince us that the Iraqi people want and need a continuing US military occupation, these people try to hide the true goals of the occupation, which are the same as their goals for the war that they started: strategic control of the Middle East region, and control of the oil and other resources. If they even plant seeds of doubt in our minds, a concern that maybe the people of Iraq need us to help them achieve democracy, then this film has accomplished its purpose.

Locally, this movie was promoted by the Public Affairs Company, which lists the IAFA as a client on its website ([www.pubaffairsc.com](http://www.pubaffairsc.com)). The specialty of the Public Affairs Company is in developing “grass roots” organizations to help businesses and associations to lobby the government more effectively. They say, “We work with our clients to craft messages and control outcomes.” Ponder that: fake grass roots organizations formed and controlled by corporations to control outcomes. That is a corruption, not just of democracy, but of our entire public discourse.

The producers of this film very explicitly refer to their film as a grass roots effort. This film has clearly been targeted at a liberal and generally anti-war audience that really wants the people of Iraq to determine their own future. In this instance, what is the outcome that the IAFA has hired the Public Affairs Company to “control”?

It is a shame that this movie is not what it pretends to be: a real portrayal of the desires of the Iraqi people. Because it is their wishes that ought to determine the future of Iraq, not the wishes of the US military and corporations, not even the wishes of the US peace movement.

We can not claim either to fully know the desires of the Iraqi people, though they do appear to oppose a foreign military occupation, as would the people of any nation. But we do know that they will never be able to express or fulfill their desires as long as they suffer under a brutal occupying force. True democracy and freedom can not be established in a country where the occupier is establishing permanent military bases, where there are endless military checkpoints, where a puppet government privatizes (steals) the national assets and where anyone could be picked up off the street and be tortured and humiliated in prisons such as Abu Ghraib.

Yes, we have a political agenda also: we have opposed the war and the continuing occupation since the beginning. Unlike the producers of this film, we are open about our politics. We have gained our credibility by telling the truth to the best of our ability. We call upon the promoters of the film and the Lagoon Theater to honestly reveal the source of this film. We suspect that if they did that, the backers of the film would pull it immediately. Fake “grass roots” efforts disappear when they are exposed.

We will continue to picket and leaflet at the Lagoon Theater to expose this film and its source. Please join us here. Please also call the Lagoon Theater at 612-825-6006 to protest their showing of this film.

For more information about the occupation of Iraq, about this film and its sponsors; or to join us in our work, please contact the following organizations who have sponsored this leaflet:

Antiwar Committee 612-379-3899 [antiwarcommittee.org](http://antiwarcommittee.org)  
[info@antiwarcommittee.org](mailto:info@antiwarcommittee.org)

Counter Propaganda Coalition [counterprop.org](http://counterprop.org)



Other voices of Iraq