

## This Must HALT! A Challenge

Continued from front page

her from cutting off funding for the war, or even proposing a withdrawal of the troops. In fact, the whole Democratic Party has this same “gene.” The question is, responsible to whom and what?

Responsible to the Iraqis? Dick Durbin, in his official Democratic response to Bush’s announcement of an escalation, put it this way: “We have given the Iraqis so much...it is time for the Iraqis to stand and defend their own nation.” As if Iraq somehow invited the U.S. to come in and destroy their infrastructure, provoke a sectarian civil war, and steal the lives of hundreds of thousands! As if this were a gracious and magnanimous favor for which the Iraqis are being ungrateful and somehow making greedy demands for more of!

Responsible to the millions who voted for them, in the hopes that they would stand up to Bush? Ted Kennedy admitted in advance that by the time a vote comes on his bill to cut the funds for escalation, “The troops will already be there. And then we’ll be asked, are we going to deny body armor to the young men and women over there?” And Nancy Pelosi has backed him up: “Democrats will never cut off funding for our troops when they are in harm’s way.”

This is even after Bush has publicly sworn that he won’t listen to or be stopped by Congress! Asked on *60 Minutes* whether he thought being commander-in-chief gave him “the authority to put the troops in there no matter what the Congress wants,” Bush snarled, “Yeah...they could try to stop me from doing it. But I made my decision, and we’re going forward.”

So to whom and what are these big politicians responsible? When they talk about “redeploying American troops” in the region around Iraq to protect “our interests”—whose interests are being protected? Where is the major Democratic politician who has come out and called this war what it is—an illegal and immoral war that was launched to protect imperial interests in the Middle East? Where is the Democrat who would show how those interests are NOT those of the people in Iraq, or the Middle East more broadly, or the majority of people within the U.S.?

If you open your ears and listen, you will hear that all the debate being allowed is over how to defend and extend the military strength, global reach, and interests of the U.S. system. How best to maneuver the U.S. ship of state through the tumultuous waters of global upheaval and reconfiguration in the wake of the Cold War and the massive migrations of people, factories, and capital caused by the turbo-paced capitalist globalization. How best to hammer people in this society into an even more repressive morality and legal system. And how to do it all while intensifying U.S. political domination and global exploitation and the terrible toll in needless human suffering that goes with it.

At the same time, there ARE real differences at the top. This war is going badly. Talk of a possible constitutional crisis echoes even into the halls of Congress. But as long as this remains a struggle over how best to defend and expand empire in a debate conducted by the empire’s politicians in the empire’s chamber, these differences will never go anywhere good. Without a massive upheaval from below, based on the interests and demands of the overwhelming majority of people here and around the world, the paralysis of the Democrats will continue to enable Bush to commit his crimes.

### Needed: More—and More Determined—Protest and Resistance

The whole situation and direction and options “up for debate” are intolerable!

The paralyzed Democrats at the top have made clear that they, on their own, will not stop this. This whole situation can only be changed for the better by millions standing up, protesting and resisting this whole course.

But, yes, we need a different kind of protest. Not protest pleading with those who rule over us to “do the right thing,” followed by a return to the routine...but protests that make clear to all that until these crimes are halted we will not rest. Protest that challenges those in society sitting on the sidelines to join in. Protest that aims at nothing less than actually stopping this juggernaut, and that does not flinch at the upheaval that could entail. For when has any major change for the better come without upheaval and struggle??

Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, has spoken of the kind of spirit we need:

“It’s not merely a matter of letting the people in power know that we don’t like what they’re doing. It is saying that this course they’re on is one that will bring disaster to people all over the world, and we not only don’t support this but are going to act—to build massive political mobilization—to stop it. In this people can draw lessons, and draw inspiration, from those parents of U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq, and

**The essence of what exists in the U.S. is not democracy but capitalism-imperialism and political structures to enforce that capitalism-imperialism.**

**What the U.S. spreads around the world is not democracy, but imperialism and political structures to enforce that imperialism.**

**Bob Avakian**

who have come out in opposition to that war—and some of whom have come out in opposition to the whole disastrous direction of things, joining in with World Can’t Wait. These people have changed their whole lives. They’re not just saying, ‘I’ll put a bumper sticker on my car to show I’m opposed.’ Bumper stickers with progressive sentiments, statements in opposition to the war and other crimes of this regime—that is good—but these ‘bumper sticker people’ should be challenged: what are you gonna do about it.” [Bob Avakian, “On the Importance of World Can’t Wait...” *Revolution*, 62]

Without this spirit, there will be no good change. With it, a world of possibility can open up.

### A Call to the Students and Youth

During the ’60s, the youth and students demanded and debated over the truth, and they fought for it. These youth, Black and white and all nationalities, dared to say “this system of racial segregation and oppression, this war in Vietnam, these institutions based on suppressing women...these are outrageous and they are immoral, and they can no longer be tolerated...for another minute.”

These youth put their bodies on the line for those beliefs. They broke free of the calculus of imperial interests and shell-game elections and they went to the people and took to the streets. And in doing so, they changed the face of a society.

This generation faces an even sharper challenge. It can no longer rest content with detesting Bush, while retreating into the cop-out of worldly wise cynicism. Calculations about school grades and career plans no longer apply for Iraqis whose streets have become killing fields...and they can no longer apply for those of us living in the society that has unleashed these horrors. The education needed above all in times like these is one that teaches and inspires debate over how to stand up for a whole different world...not how to find a future operating within the nightmare descending over this one.

Think about it. The Bush regime has encountered big troubles in butchering their way toward what Condoleezza Rice calls “a new Middle East.” Even as the regime responds to these troubles by further throwing down the gauntlet, it confronts a political situation in this country of massive disaffection. The world is waiting for you—asking for you and wondering when you will finally rise to the mission that is on you to stop this—and galvanize the whole of society when you do.

There needs to be ferment and protest and political struggle taking over the campuses, where those of you who see what is going on challenge your friends, your teachers, your families and all of society with an uncompromising stand.

And everyone else throughout society, especially those who lived through the liberating struggles of the ’60s and those who have a platform to speak from, need to share the responsibility to inspire and compel the youth of today at the same time as they raise their own voices once again to the whole of society saying: There’s no one else to rely on. We are the ones, in our millions, who must bring this to a halt!

### Discussion, Debate and Unity

There is a debate that has been ruled out of order, and that

## Waiting for 2008: Unconscionable

A word here on the notion that people should put our energies into choosing a candidate who can contend for the Presidency in ’08.

What kind of society waits two years to put an end to torture, to the rape of foreign lands, to the slaughter of children and to the fueling of a civilization-destroying civil war?

What kind of people exchange the lives and futures of millions for political capital in an election two years away over who can best oversee their “New Rome”?

Especially after the results of this last election and the subsequent escalation of the war, it is self-delusion bordering on criminal complicity to wait for 2008 to repudiate the Bush regime, bring its program to a halt and reverse the fascist direction of this society. By then it could easily be too late.

needs to be pried back open; it is a debate over how the world has gotten to this place, what must be done to change it, and what revolution has to do with all that. This kind of debate is not only urgently needed in its own right, it is key in fueling and inspiring forward a movement powerful and determined enough to halt the horrific trajectory of today.

Critical to that whole discussion is Bob Avakian’s revolutionary vision of a truly liberating society. This issue of our paper features an article that gives a basic sense of how Bob Avakian has re-envisioned the communist project, and of his method and approach to understanding reality and how to change it. If you are seriously concerned about the future—and who cannot be?—then you need to engage what he’s saying. And we strongly encourage you to go to bobavakian.net and listen to the talk “Why We’re in the Situation We’re in Today...And What to Do About It: A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution.”

Today tens of millions are agonizing over what can be done. We must take to them the discussion of the big questions of history and morality and change that are joined in this moment, and we must at the same time move together to rouse them from the sidelines and onto the playing field of history. We put it to you: wrangle with this newspaper and then put it in the hands of others. And as you do, check out and get with and help build groups like World Can’t Wait—Drive Out the Bush Regime (worldcantwait.org) and others that are daring to lead millions to stop and drive out this regime.

After four years of a gruesome war, let us not say we have learned to live with this carnage or with the unbearable acts of torture being committed even as we march. Let us tell ourselves that a “symbolic” protest is no more conscionable than a “symbolic” vote against this murderous escalation. **Unless we resist and go forward to mobilize millions of others in mass, independent historical action, then we will bear the responsibility for the perpetuation of the very crimes thousands have come to Washington, D.C. to oppose.**

The stakes for humanity cannot be overstated. The future could ride on how we live in these next months. We must make this the year the regime is driven out. □

## NEW PRESENTATIONS

by **BOB AVAKIAN**

Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

Listen to and Download:

### Why We’re in the Situation We’re in Today... And What to Do About It: A Thoroughly Rotten System and the Need for Revolution

This is the first of 7 talks by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, that were released last year. Audio files of all the 7 talks—along with Q&A sessions and Closing Remarks—are available online at:

**bobavakian.net and revcom.us**

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