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Parents Are Right to Protect Their Children from the Military

by Jacob G. Hornberger

A recent [front-page story](#) in the *New York Times* reported growing opposition among parents to the U.S. military's efforts to contact and recruit their children to join the U.S. armed forces. In the process, parents are also discovering some uncomfortable things about the federal government.

One thing parents are learning is that federal funds to local school districts have less to do with federal concern that children aren't learning in public (i.e., government) schools and more to do with opportunities to extend federal control over American families. Do you remember the much-vaunted No Child Left Behind Act? That Act requires school districts to give the [military access](#) to the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of high-school students as a condition of receiving federal funds. So, if a school district says "No, we won't give the military the information it seeks to recruit our students," it loses its federal welfare even if all those children are supposedly "left behind" as a consequence.

Obviously, the biggest reason for parents' opposition to the military's recruitment efforts would be to protect their children from losing their lives and limbs for no valid purpose. After all, ask yourself: What parents would place a higher value on the installation of an Islamic Shi'ite regime in Iraq, even a democratically elected one, than they would on the life or limbs of their own child? (U.S. officials, of course, do claim that the deaths and maiming of U.S. personnel, as well as the deaths and maiming of tens of thousands of Iraqis, have been worth it.)

But another important factor should be going into the thinking of every parent — and, for that matter, every person who is contemplating going into the military: There is no way to reconcile killing an Iraqi citizen, including one who is defending his nation against an unlawful invader and occupier, with God's sacred commandment against killing, given that the U.S. government is wrongfully in Iraq because Iraq never attacked the United States or even threatened to attack our country.

That makes the U.S. the aggressor nation in this conflict and the unlawful and immoral occupier of a sovereign and independent country. That means that the Iraqis who have been

killed and who have yet to be killed as part of the U.S. invasion and occupation are just as innocent as the victims on 9/11 in the sense that none of the Iraqi victims had anything to do with the 9/11 attacks and none of them lived under a government that attacked or even threatened to attack the United States. Thus, U.S. soldiers who kill or maim Iraqis as part of what is called a “war of aggression,” a type of war barred by the UN Charter and punished at the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, will ultimately have to struggle morally and religiously with what they have done.

Some soldiers will undoubtedly say, “I didn’t know I was going to have to invade an innocent country when I signed up and, anyway, I’m killing for my country,” as if orders by their government to wage a war of aggression excuse them from [exercising the conscience](#) that God gave them.

But that excuse is not even available to new recruits: They’re going to have to explain to God why they signed up knowing that they were going to have to kill innocent people as part of a military force that wrongfully invaded a country and persisted in occupying it with no more purpose than to establish a political regime that it was hoped would be more friendly to the U.S. government than Saddam Hussein’s regime was.

Parents are wise to protect their children from the U.S. military and its wrongful invasion and occupation of Iraq, not only in the hope of protecting the lives and limbs of their children from being wasted in an wrongful and and destructive cause but also in the hope of ensuring that their children are not put in the horrible moral dilemma of either killing innocent people or being killed.

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