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Obama's speech on Iraq

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On Tuesday evening, President Barack Obama [delivered an address](#) to the American people telling us that combat operations in Iraq had come to an end, though the speech also gave him an opportunity to talk about the economy.

In case you missed it, here it is:

I know you're not shocked to learn that we still have a vast presence in Iraq as some 50,000 "advisors" (ie. troops) [remain in the country to assist the Iraqi government](#) and they are still in danger, as President Obama said. But not every thing he said was accurate as the *Associated Press* pointed out [in a fact check after the speech](#):

Peril remains for the tens of thousands of U.S. troops still in Iraq, who are likely if not certain to engage violent foes. Counterterrorism is chief among their continuing missions, pitting them against a lethal enemy. Several thousand special operations forces, including Army Green Berets and Navy SEALs, will continue to hunt and attempt to kill al-Qaida and other terrorist fighters — working closely with Iraqi forces. Obama said, "Of course, violence will not end with our combat mission," while stopping short of a full accounting of the hazards ahead for U.S. troops.

Look, I understand that Obama opposed the war in Iraq and that this isn't his mess, as Christopher Preble [said yesterday in a write-up over at the Daily Caller](#). However, it is deceptive to give the impression that is being left on Americans after last night. We're still going to be in Iraq, for many years and the costs, both lives lost and monetary, will continue to weigh on us.

With that said, the withdrawal of "combat forces" from Iraq doesn't absolve him from escalating the number of troops in Afghanistan, essentially making the same case that his predecessor made for the surge in Iraq. Guess where most of those soldiers leaving Iraq are headed? [Right back into a war zone](#).

Over at the *Denver Post*, David Harsanyi hopes the [last seven years has taught us a lesson about nation building](#):


President Barack Obama claims that the end of the combat mission is no time for victory laps. But the president, who once accused the Bush administration of intentionally sending soldiers to die in Iraq to create a political distraction, now asserts that "America is more secure."


Are we? It is far-fetched to believe that 50,000 U.S. troops remaining in Iraq in a "training and backup role" will be withdrawn by the end of 2011 as scheduled.


Recently, coordinated bombings in 13 cities across Iraq killed more than 70 people and wounded hundreds of others. If the violence continues to escalate, are these 50,000 American troops going to take a "backup role" in Iraq's ethnic and religious wars?


Doubtful. And less secure.

United Liberty Writers

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