

**PRESS RELEASE**

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**For Immediate Release**

Event: Friday Rally marks the Independence Day weekend, focusing on the assault on civil liberties at home, and the fraudulent transfer of “sovereignty” in Iraq.

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Date: Friday, July 2nd, 2004

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Place: Pioneer Courthouse Square

**Friday Rally marks the Independence Day weekend, focusing on the assault on civil liberties at home, and the fraudulent transfer of “sovereignty” in Iraq.**

Friday’s 5:00 p.m. PPRC rally at Pioneer Courthouse Square marks the Independence Day weekend by focusing on the Bush Administration assault on civil liberties at home, and the fraudulent transfer of “sovereignty” in Iraq. “Imagine if the newly established United States had been put under the control of a former British intelligence operative, a collaborator with King George, and that he’d invited British troops to continue to occupy the “sovereign” territories, guaranteed that British companies and financial interests would dominate the economy, and granted immunity from prosecution to all British soldiers and personnel,” asked William Seaman, a PPRC volunteer. “One difference with today’s “sovereign” Iraq is that the colonial ruler is *President* George, but we of course must remember that today’s George W., like King George, was also not democratically elected.”

“Civil rights have been under attack since September 11th in this country,” said Nancy Hedrick, a regular speaker at the weekly rallies at Pioneer Courthouse Square. “The current Administration pushed through the USA Patriot Act almost overnight, without adequate review of its expanded federal powers of surveillance and other changes in judicial procedure.” Last Fall the City Council of Portland joined other cities and states by going on record to oppose the USA Patriot Act. “Continuing pressure by citizens and local bodies is needed to reinforce our rights of freedom of speech and assembly, right to a fair and speedy trial if detained, and protections against unwarranted invasions of privacy,” said Hedrick. PPRC plans to hand out copies of the Bill of Rights at the Friday rally.

Hedrick noted that the common citizen’s civil liberties in Iraq will not improve under the so-called “transfer of power.” “With the continuing presence of thousands of U.S. troops, little will change in many areas of the country,” said Hedrick. “Iraqis will still have little protection against arbitrary arrest or detention without trial, or protection

against arbitrary search of their homes or persons.” Hedrick also predicted that civilian casualties from U.S. actions will continue to be significant, in particular from air strikes which have often destroyed residential homes when US forces have attacked what they claim are “terrorists” or “militants”.

The early announcement of the turnover of sovereignty will also be taken up by the Friday rally. “A secret transfer “ceremony” in the middle of the night is not a sign of victory but of defeat,” said Tina Hulbe, another frequent speaker at the Friday rallies. “While L. Paul Bremmer has made his retreat to safety, our service people remain in as much danger as ever.” Only yesterday, three US servicemen were killed by a roadside bomb. “A new government, installed under cover of darkness and without popular election; an announcement that martial law may be declared; armed factions jockeying for post-occupation power and killing civilians in the process; are these the hallmarks of democracy?,” asked Hulbe. “The very proposition that Iraqi sovereignty is something that can be “handed over” by the United States is absurdly patronizing.”

This week’s Friday rally will also include music by local artists.