



*Office of Justice and Peace
Campaign for Human Development
Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon
2838 East Burnside St.
Portland, OR 97214
503-233-8361*

March 21, 2007

Dear Member of Congress:

The war in Iraq has cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians and thousands of military personnel, and caused physical and mental injury to many more. Since long before the war, people of faith and repeatedly expressed grave moral concerns about military intervention, and the unpredictable and uncontrollable negative consequences of the invasion and occupation. Our Bishops' Conference has repeatedly said that the search for genuine justice and peace in Iraq requires moral urgency, substantive dialogue, and a new direction that promotes stability and reconstruction in Iraq.

The nation now needs a civil, non-partisan discussion of ways to secure a responsible transition to peace. We urge Congress to engage in a collaborative dialogue that honestly assesses the situation in Iraq, acknowledges past errors, and reaches agreement on concrete steps to address the serious challenges that lie ahead. This new dialogue should not fight old battles, but instead consider future courses of action that promote peace, especially in light of their human and financial costs.

Our nation's military forces should remain in Iraq only as long as their presence contributes to genuine and lasting peace for the Iraqi people. Our nation should look for the best way to end troop deployment at the earliest opportunity consistent with this goal.

The goals of United States policy toward Iraq should be to:

- (1) support the people of Iraq in their desire for security and self-determination;
- (2) mitigate against a worsening of violence in Iraq and seek to prevent additional sectarian violence;
- (3) re-establish United States international credibility, military readiness, and fiscal responsibility.

Religious leaders throughout our region are urging the Oregon Congressional Delegation to cosponsor and support H.R. 663 "New Direction for Iraq Act of 2007" and a comparable bill in the U.S. Senate, which includes the following elements that will accomplish a responsible transition to peace for the Iraqi people:

- **Stop the Escalation:** Prohibit the escalation of the Iraq war without specific Congressional approval.
- **Redeployment:** Requires the responsible redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq to start within 30 days and to be completed within approximately one year.
- **Reconstruction:** Redirects U.S. reconstruction funding from large contractors to Iraqi owned businesses to help create jobs in Iraq.
- **Diplomacy:** Direct the President to begin a regional diplomatic effort, including direct negotiations with Syria and Iran, to promote stability in Iraq and seek to solve other outstanding regional issues.
- **No Permanent Bases:** Prohibit the establishment of permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq.
- **Benchmarks:** Require the President and the Iraqi government to agree on meaningful benchmarks for progress, and support the Iraqi government in the achievement of those benchmarks.
- **Civil Society:** Authorize additional funds for strengthening Iraqi civil society, including labor unions, environmental groups, and community organizations.



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- Refugees: Require the development of country-by-country strategies to address the needs of Iraqi refugees.
- Disarm militias: Authorize assistance to support a neutral international effort to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of sectarian militias.
- Reconciliation: Require the appointment of a Special Envoy for Iraq Reconciliation.
- Israeli-Palestinian peace: Direct the President to initiate new negotiations for a just peace agreement between Israel and Palestine.
- United Nations: Direct the President to seek a new United Nations resolution to support international cooperation in stabilizing Iraq.
- Control of resources: Promote sole Iraqi control and administration of oil reserves, infrastructure, and economic policies, especially those concerning reconstruction.
- Stop fraud and abuse: Instruct the President to nullify all contracts with firms that have failed to complete required contractual agreements, and recover all lost funds and overpayments for such contracts
- Punish war profiteering: Authorize Congress to continue its oversight of all U.S. expenditures and contracts, and require the U.S. Attorney General's Office to aggressively prosecute fraud and war profiteering.

We urge you to support this legislation. Our parishes will be conducting a petition drive over the coming weeks in support of this legislation, and will be sending signatures directly to your office.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

David Carrier
Director
Office of Justice and Peace