

**THE IRAQ WAR**  
**and a**  
**PROPOSAL TO BRING THE TROOPS HOME**  
**AT A PRESET TIMETABLE**

**Abbreviated Version**

**By Jesus Hurtado**

## INTRODUCTION

Whatever the causes of the Iraq war (oil, weapons of mass destruction, democracy, and so on) and whether any success or failure has been gained, today this does not mean much.

Today it is clear that we are facing a war and its aftermath. Specifically the governments of Iraq and the United States, but also all individuals and institutions striving for world peace, have a great responsibility to end one of the most tragic wars of the past few years. Many Americans cannot bear to be part of it, nor can we close our eyes to this reality or to be accomplices of so much human tragedy and suffering. As a U.S. citizen who is very disturbed by this war, I share my thoughts and a proposal to bring the troops home at a preset timetable.

### **PROPOSAL TO BRING BACK THE TROOPS AT A PRESET TIMETABLE, AND TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ**

This proposal is grounded in the following reasoning: 1) the situation in Iraq has deteriorated and the conflict created there has a political rather than a military solution, 2) the participation of the international community (U.N., Arab League, G-8 countries, E.U.), in which the United States would have to participate in equal conditions, is crucial for the solution of the Iraqi conflict, 3) the troops should not be in the middle of a sectarian conflict and fighting a misguided war like the one affecting the Iraqi people now, 4) the presence of American troops in Iraq is more an aggravating factor to the conflict than a pacifying one, 5) it is irresponsible to expose the American troops to the danger of injury and death in a conflict whose features are not clear either internally or in the outlying region and its objectives, questionable, 6) for the benefit of the national security of the country, the safety of the troops, the solution to the Iraqi conflict and the stabilization of the region, a realistic plan to bring the troops home at a set timetable is necessary.

- i) Official numbers of armies in Iraq:
  - a) 140,000 American troops (estimated)
  - b) 275,000 Iraqi troops. At the end of 2006 it would be 325,000 Iraqi troops (Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. Star Tribune 8/9/06)
  
- ii) A timetable to bring the American troops home.  
A set time limit of fifteen (15) months: this would include the month of October 2006 until December 31, 2007. (Note: If the date of October 2006 is not achieved for this purpose, it would only limit the set time without altering the overall schedule. This would mean that the first troops would leave on January 1, 2007.)
  
- iii) A strategic-tactical procedure to bring 140,000 American troops from Iraq:  
January 1, 2007: 40,000 troops  
January 1, 2008: 100,000 troops
  - a) Assuming approval is obtained on October 2006 of bring the troops home, three (3) months would have to pass until December 31, 2006 so on January 1, 2007 to bring the first 40,000 troops.

Explanation: The purpose of bringing the first 40,000 troops home at a set date is to show to the Iraqi government that the troops would leave as decided. This would have the political/strategic objective to pressure the Iraqi government to consolidate and assume its role as government and its responsibility for national security of the country, which it has often neglected. Proceeding in this fashion, it would be the beginning of establishing that "the

actions are the ones determining the events, and not vice-versa." By that time, according to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld's count, there would be about 325,000 Iraqi troops in the region.

b) As decided, on January 1, 2008 the remaining 100,000 troops would come home.

However, in the first week of December 2007, there would be a political-military assessment of the Iraq situation. If, according to the outcome of this assessment, it is deemed necessary to leave behind in Iraq some special armed forces (advisers, trainers, logistic personnel) in order to support Iraqi troops, then there would be more flexibility and about 100,000 troops would be allowed to leave, or as many as necessary for this mission.

Explanation: According to official reports, in the last three years, 275,000 Iraqi soldiers have been trained, an average of 90,000 soldiers per year. This means that by the time the 100,000 American troops are scheduled to withdraw (if all leave), there will be enough Iraqi soldiers to replace them.

During the period that the American troops remain in Iraq, these troops will be in charge of ramping up the training of Iraqi soldiers, but only to support their military actions and prepare themselves for their withdrawal. The Bush Administration and the Congress would work through diplomatic channels with the international community to stabilize the region after the withdrawal of the American troops and to ensure that Iraq would get the appropriate support to stabilize the situation.

CLARIFICATION: I am sure that this proposal to bring the troops home at a set timetable is realistic, but I am aware that there could be many factors affecting the schedule in order to meet this goal. For this reason, I consider the schedule established herein as flexible regarding bringing the troops home before, but not after the set date. If we want the troops to come home, a date will have to be set. If we simply call for the troops to come home without specifying when, this has the same effect as supporting an open-ended timeline for their withdrawal.

**POLITICAL, STRATEGIC, TACTICAL OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED BY BRINGING THE TROOPS HOME, AND TO SET A TIMETABLE**

The following are some of the political-strategic-tactical objectives to be attained:

- i) To end at a set-time all deaths, injuries, dangers, sufferings, and tragedies occurring daily, with the costs that a war like this may have at all levels. To end the excuses and the lies contained in it. In summary, to end with all negative effects that the war is bringing to the Iraqi people, to the American people (in particular, the soldiers) and the world.
- ii) To relieve the tensions in the region. To withdraw the invading-occupying forces, a factor of tension, hate, resistance, justifications, loss of face, causing so much unrest not only in Iraq but in the Middle East region as well, and causing confrontations within the Iraqi population, and the spawning of more terrorists.
- iii) To pressure the Iraqi government to consolidate and to seriously assume its role of governing the country, and to take responsibility over national security and therefore to allow the Iraqi government and people to-remedy its problems with the backing of the international community, since the presence of troops in Iraq is not an pacifying/stabilizing factor, but is part and parcel of the conflict in Iraq and in the region.
- iv) To give the international community (U.N.), the Arab League, the G-8 countries, E.U., Non-aligned countries), the opportunity and the chance work together with the Iraqi people to solve the conflicts and to stabilize Iraq and the region.
- v) To change the role of the American troops from being in the frontline to being support troops of the Iraqi army until the American troops withdraw from Iraq. The Iraqi forces would have the advantage of gaining experience and could assume the responsibility of national security of their country with the support and supervision of the American forces, and at the same time sparing many lives.
- vi) To improve the moral of the troops knowing that in a set time they will go home and knowing that the return is not longer uncertain. •
- vii) To repair the bad relations that the U.S. currently has with the countries opposed to the war, to end the self-isolation and to remove the roadblocks to U.S. diplomacy.
- viii) To show the American people that, thanks to a responsible policy and a sure strategy, the war conflict might have a successful outcome, and that now the troops would be safe indeed...in their own country.

## OTHER REASONS TO SUPPORT BRINGING THE TROOPS HOME

As we can see in the current conditions and the results obtained thus far, this war has lacked a political/military strategy for the benefit of the country from its onset. This could be observed at the beginning in the differences of opinion in the civilian-military upper echelons regarding the strategies and tactics to be used to invade Iraq. However, the most amazing thing is that up until now, after three years of war, thousands of deaths, hundreds of billions of dollars wasted, there is not yet a real political military-strategy to end the war, to pacify the region, to avoid more deaths, destruction, and to bring the troops home, to be really safe, so the national security of the country does not become a national insecurity.

The U.S. occupation of Iraq and the subsequent fall of Saddam Hussein regime was seen from the start like more an invasion than a liberation of the Iraqi people, by friends and foes around the world and in particular in Iraq. The consequences that this has brought are quite clear.

After three years into the war, the perception about invading Iraq has not changed; just the opposite, it has deepened, worsening the conflict. The dire human tragedies occurring daily and the aftermath of the war (economics, destruction, errors committed) can be seen daily, not only by the Iraqi people but by the American people and the world, and in particular by the troops who endure sacrifices and die every day in the streets and fields of a country that they have nothing in common with, which has not committed aggression against their own motherland, leaving them with no significant and valid reasons to invade.

For all of the above and especially because the troops are a factor which makes the conflict worse rather than helping to solve the problem, we do not want the troops to be used and/or manipulated to serve other than the noble interests of the country. Because we do not want more deaths, more injured, more of a senseless war, and many other known and unknown factors, the least we can do now is: end the war and bring our troops home as soon as possible. This will demonstrate:

- i) That we indeed care about the interests and the national security of the country. ii) That we really care about the interests and safety of our troops.
- iii) That the US in fact has high moral and democratic values, which help it to recognize and mend its errors, and that it is not just being hypocritical when talking about them.
- iv) That we are indeed human beings, not merely by virtue of our intelligence, but out of a spirituality and conscience that makes us desire a world with peace and well-being for all.

Also, we must realize that the war in Iraq is a sectarian, violent confrontation where the U.S. must not be involved. Despite all the damage inflicted upon the Iraqi people by this sectarian violence, it has also brought dire consequences to the U.S. and overall has distracted and paralyzed the United States' real objective in the war against terrorism.

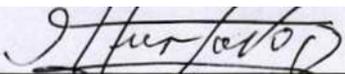
Therefore we might surmise that the U.S. is playing into the hands of the terrorists because this country has been embroiled in the wrong war, draining its resources, sacrificing its troops and the values held dear by the majority of the American people. Because of this war, the terrorist network is growing ever more powerful, and it is neutralizing the U.S. anti-terrorism campaign, and worse yet, it has nurtured an environment for new militants around the world. The Iraq war is not the front line against terrorism.

Because of all those aforementioned fundamental reasons, I believe that the U.S. must stop its involvement in this war, leave Iraq, bring the troops home, and refocus its war against terrorism.

## EFFORTS TO BRING BACK THE TROOPS AT A PRESET TIMETABLE AND TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

Despite all efforts made to set a timetable to bring the troops home and to end this senseless war (demonstrations, marches, vigils, Senators Kerry and Levin's proposals, and other influential voices), we can see that it is has not been possible to do that because the weight of the U.S. Congress has leaned more towards continuing rather than ending the war. Why this has happened? I would like to mention the following reasons:

- i) The confusion and uncertainty of the American people (including elected officials) about what has been happening and will continue to happen in Iraq, about the war, about the troops, about the history of Iraq and the region (in great part because of the lack of good data, understanding and knowledge, and the problem of secrecy).
- ii) The manipulation, distortions and blackmailing by the Bush Administration, the Republican Party and its allies, its self-serving use of a string of fears, events, pseudo-arguments, patriotic sentiments, etc.
- iii) The political belligerency of the Bush Administration, the Republican Party and its allies, and the political frailty of the opposition, especially the Democratic Party, due in part to the disadvantage of being in the minority, but above all due to the inconsistency and lack of unity in Congress as well as in the core of the party.
- iv) The lack of initiative of the Democratic Party (as the only opposition) in many ways, such as:
  - a) It has not submitted a united and realistic strategy to the Senate and to the American people and has not shown unity, confidence, determination or a real option to end the war.
  - b) It has not uncovered the maneuverings, pseudo arguments, and blackmailing, and has not defended itself against false accusations.
  - c) It has not demonstrated that the Bush Administration lacks a true strategy to benefit the country.
  - d) It has not focused the debate between continuing or ending the war.



Jesus Hurtado

*"I am a Bolivian national by birth, and a U.S.A. citizen. I work as an electro-mechanic technician. Married. A father of a daughter and a son. In 1989, I was part of a 20-day hunger strike group at the St. Paul Cathedral, St. Paul, Minnesota, with Father Roy Bourgeois and others to protest the conflict in El Salvador*

Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 1, 2006

*P.S. A full-length version of this proposal is available by request by calling 612-366-0649 or by mail at 3026 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave South, Minneapolis, MN 55406.*

## **MESSAGE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY**

I respectfully address the Democratic Party to ask that it recognize that, as the opposition and alternative to change, it is the only thing the American people have. This condition is even more relevant for the huge responsibility on the shoulders of the Democratic Party, at least in the current historic period, when the country is under threat from many external and internal dangers. It is time to thank the Democratic Party for all the efforts that has made in the past and all that it is doing now internally and externally to confront the Bush administration and the Republican Party for all of their follies and in the upcoming elections to watch for the needs of the country. I am morally compelled by the current events, especially the Iraq war, to ask for a Democratic Party with a fundamental unity and integrity, capable of answering the needs of the American people and being a real alternative to the Bush Administration and its Republican Party, for the benefit of the country.

## **MESSAGE TO ALL CONCERNED**

I give my heartfelt condolences to all the families of soldiers, civilian combatants and non-combatants, innocent victims who have died because of this senseless war. Moreover, I extend my sympathy and my deepest respect to all those who have been injured or maimed in the war, both American people as well as Iraqi people, and people from other countries. I beg the Iraq people for their forgiveness for all the offenses, suffering and destruction that the U.S. has caused them, and to end the internal bloodletting for the good of their own country. To the American people, I urge them not to allow aggression against other countries in its name, but to punish the culprits causing so much unwarranted suffering, compromising the integrity of the country, and to be compassionate with the suffering of others.

I dedicate my efforts in this cause to the children and other innocent victims, to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice or who in one way or another have suffered, suffer now, and will suffer the consequences of this war in the future, to the Iraqi people, the American people and other affected countries.

JH  
October 2006