



Bring the Troops Home Campaign Toolkit

*Pass a resolution in your community to demand
a safe return for our troops.*

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CFP Press Release

Press Release

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Chicago and Philadelphia Become 55th and 56th U.S. Municipalities to Demand “Bring the Troops Home!”

Fifty-six U.S. cities and towns have now passed resolutions calling on President George W. Bush to start pulling back troops from Iraq. Chicago and Philadelphia are the second and third major cities to pass a “Bring the Troops Home” resolution. San Francisco was the first large city to pass a resolution.

Chicago began a flurry of local actions against the Iraq war in when the City Council passed an anti-war resolution in March 2003. The action was followed by New York, Boston, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and other cities around the country accounting for more than 45 million Americans.

The effort to pass city council resolutions against the continuation of the war in Iraq is being coordinated by Karen Dolan and Malia Lazu of Cities for Progress, a project of the Institute for Policy Studies. “As public sentiment against the war grows and approval ratings for Bush’s handling of Iraq plummets, citizens again take to City Hall to take matters of war and peace into their own hands” says Karen Dolan, Director of Cities for Peace and Cities for Progress.

Cities for Progress is a growing network of locally-elected officials and community-based activists working together for social change. CFP is a network that incorporates local, national and global approaches to issues that affect us in our own communities. It is an outgrowth of Cities for Peace under which local resolutions were passed prior to the Iraq war. Nearly 200 cities and towns expressed their concerns about the cost to local communities. Cities for Progress is also taking on other issues including Universal Healthcare and opposing Wal-Mart expansion.

Karen Dolan and Malia Lazu are available for interviews.



Media Coverage

Iraq vote follows council scare

By Gary Washburn and Robert Becker
The Chicago Tribune
Published September 15, 2005

Chicago's City Council on Wednesday called for an immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, but aldermen displayed the same kind of division on the issue that is common across the nation.

At a more than 5-hour meeting during which Ald. Burton Natarus (42nd) threw a scare into his colleagues after collapsing to the council floor, aldermen voted 29-9 to support the resolution.

The vote, which came after several aldermen had departed from the chamber, made Chicago the second major city after San Francisco to formally call for a pullout. Some smaller municipalities have passed similar measures, including Evanston, where the City Council voted 8-1 Monday in favor of a pullout.

Chicago aldermen who supported the resolution on Wednesday said that President Bush and members of Congress are the ones who should be moving to pull out American forces. But they asserted that local officials must do what they can if there is no action in Washington.

"It is the obligation of elected officials closest to the people," said Ald. Joe Moore (49th), one of the lead sponsors of the resolution.

"I think anything we do to dilute or undermine the [troop] morale is wrong," declared Ald. Edward Burke (14th), who voted against the measure.

Calling for a speedy and unilateral withdrawal is "irresponsible, foolhardy, unintelligent and we shouldn't be part of it," Burke fumed.

"If this ordinance gives encouragement to one bomber, one sniper, one [enemy] fighter, I can't be for that," said Ald. Ted Matlak (32nd).

But proponents of the measure cited ill-conceived U.S. policy, the growing loss of American lives and the expenditure of huge sums of money that could be used constructively in this country.

"This is a personal war as far as I am concerned," said Ald. Ray Suarez (31st), referring to Bush. "This is a cowboy war."

"You are not supporting the troops when they are being killed," said Ald. Bernard Stone (50th). "Why should this slaughter continue? What purpose does it serve? Why should our troops die for no reason?"

Natarus said he supported the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, but not the continuing attempt to form a democratic government in the image of the U.S.

"We want to go all over the world and make every country like us," he said.

After concluding a speech that lasted about five minutes, Natarus told a colleague that he wasn't feeling well and headed for an exit. He collapsed to the floor of the council chamber before reaching the door.

(Article continues)

South Charleston Council adopts Iraq withdrawal resolution

The Associated Press
Published September 16, 2005

SOUTH CHARLESTON, W.Va. – City Council members in this Kanawha River community voted 5-4 Thursday night to adopt a resolution that calls on President Bush to withdraw American troops from Iraq as soon as possible.

Mayor Richie Robb, a Republican, said he was motivated to write the three-page resolution after watching television one night and seeing that American government funds were being used to rebuild Iraq's infrastructure while his city has to scrape to obtain money for highway and bridge projects.

"The Bush administration wanted a war, a war with Iraq," Robb said. "Now we have this quagmire that it has become and we are engaged in guerrilla warfare but to what end?"

"This is not a partisan issue. War has never been a partisan issue, but the Bush administration has made it one. They have hidden behind party labels to mask their ineptness."

Robb, who has been mayor of the 15,000-resident community for nearly 30 years, said he hopes other communities in West Virginia and across the country will follow South Charleston and adopt similar resolutions.

Chicago's City Council already voted 29-9 earlier this month to urge the Bush administration to withdraw troops immediately.

"It's an American issue of national importance," the mayor said.

Robb, who won a Bronze Star for his Army service in Vietnam, has long opposed the Iraq war.

As one of five Republican electors last year, Robb threatened to withhold his vote from Bush because of his opposition to the war and Bush's tax cuts and other economic policies. Robb eventually voted for Bush.

Robb's resolution notes that no evidence has been found linking Iraq with the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorists attacks and no weapons of mass destruction were found after American troops entered the country.

The "current goal of the democratization of the Middle East has mired American armed forces in an internecine, centuries old conflict of ethnic, cultural and religious rivalries in Iraq," the resolution reads.

Because of the continued conflict, the nation's resources are being drained as "evidenced by the inadequate disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina."

The vote came in the same week U.S. Sen. Robert C. Byrd called for a national debate on the war.

"The season has come for Americans to look homeward ... instead of continuing to spend billions of dollars in Iraq," Byrd, D-W.Va., said Tuesday.

South Charleston's resolution also urges Byrd and West Virginia's other congressional members to start a debate in Congress over the withdrawal of troops.

Although the resolution was modified to eliminate a time reference, setting a withdrawal date "will not weaken America's commitment but instead reflect the United States has accomplished its mission, and the future of Iraq rests ultimately with the people of that nation," the resolution said.



Getting a City Council Resolution Passed in Your Community

The following is a simple guide to getting a City Council Resolution passed in your community. A City Council Resolution campaign is not a "one size fits all" effort but the following are ideas to get you started.

Gather a Coalition of Local Organizations to Support the Effort

Many communities have existing community organizations, neighborhood associations, peace and justice coalitions. If a coalition does not exist in your community, a City Council Resolution campaign is a great opportunity to launch an effort to amass the power of different groups and constituencies to advance progressive policies in your community. Think outside the box! Gather a host committee with representatives from different constituencies including faith-based groups, students and youth organizations, peace and justice groups, sympathetic business groups, groups that work on poverty, immigrant groups, racial justice organizations etc. Call a first meeting to launch this idea.

Survey Your City/Town Council

If you are unsure about where your City Council stands on your issue of interest, you may want to start by surveying the Council so you can assess who are your allies, swing members, and those that will pose a tough challenge. Call each office and ask the Council Members (or their staff) if they would generally support a Resolution in favor of your effort. This effort can be divided amongst different organizations. Make sure there is a point person who is collecting the results of the survey to report back at the next meeting.

Gather Public Signatures

If you already have a resolution draft in mind that you would like to have the Council pass you may want to spend some time gathering petition signatures from the Councilpeople's constituents. This will help leverage Council Members' support and may help in getting similar language passed by the Council instead of a watered-down version. Ask the members of your coalition to each collect a stack of signatures.

Identify Council Member Allies

Identify your strongest ally(s) on your City Council and set up a meeting with him/her to discuss introducing a resolution. Bring education packet to share with them including talking points, copies of City Council resolutions from other communities, newspaper articles, costs to your community and signed petitions. Ask the Council Person(s) to take the lead in garnering the support of other Council Members. Ask the Council Person to approve the language in the draft resolution. This process may take a number of days and a fair amount of negotiating.

If the Council Person agrees to take the lead, set up a follow up meeting with the Council Person's aid. To secure the support of other council members and to move the process along swiftly it is often easier to work with aids.

If the Council Person is not willing to lead the effort to get a resolution passed, first assess the reasons why. Is it that the resolution you presented would prove impossible to get secure support? Is the Council Person afraid to take the lead on this issue? Depending on the reason you may want to try some of the following paths:

- Try a different member of the council.
- Plan actions to target the member.
- Negotiate on the draft resolution language (see sample resolutions and other City Council Resolutions).

Set Up A Public Education Event or Town Hall Meeting

At any point in this process you may want to consider setting up a public event in your city to garner wider support for your initiative, to bring more citizen power into the effort, and to build the movement in your city. If there are forums or teach-ins already planned you may want to just work with the organizers of those events to get on the speaking docket and invite the public to your next planning meeting. One way bring City Council Members into this effort early is to set it up as a "town hall meeting" where you have a panel of people presenting the various arguments for (and against) the resolution and a panel of Council Members and citizens listening and asking follow-up questions.

Outreach to the Media

The easiest way to make the resolution effort appealing to the media is to draw the direct impacts on your city. The National Priorities Project is available to help you crunch the numbers on how much various budget initiatives, including war spending, will cost local taxpayers in your community. This, combined with the budgetary crisis facing many cities, makes a great hook for press.

A public education event or action is a great opportunity to inform journalists about the Cities for Progress campaign. If you are not holding a public education event, consider holding a press

conference featuring City Council Members leading the effort and diverse members of your Coordinating body or coalition. If you don't have allied Council Members you may want to plan the media outreach around an action designed to target the Council Member and expose their unwillingness to support this effort. You may want to hold a Candle Light Vigil at their home or conduct a sit-in at their office.

Draft a press release and send it to your local and regional press.

If a Resolution passes successfully don't forget to do follow-up media work. Hold a press conference and claim a victory for peace.

What to do when a City Council Resolution will not pass (or even get introduced) in your city

It will prove almost impossible for many cities to pass a resolution on some issues that may seem national in scope to your council. The following are some alternative options for expressing the support for your position in your city:

If you have any allied Council Members ask them to circulate a general letter in support of your position to other members and other officials in your City Government including the Board of Education, the Mayors office and other municipal departments. Any formal expressions you can obtain in favor of your campaign will help the national Cities for Progress efforts to show the national strength of local movements

You can also try different bodies in your city such as University Resolutions, Labor Union local resolutions, Parent and Teacher Associations, or other Civic bodies.

If you have a sympathetic Mayor in your city, ask him or her to issue a statement.

Send Campaign Updates and requests for assistance to Cities for Progress!

We are tracking the various efforts to get resolutions passed across the country. If you are launching a campaign in your community please send us updates to Malia Lazu at malia@ips-dc.org or Karen Dolan at kdolan@igc.org



Talking Points

By Erik Leaver, Foreign Policy in Focus / Institute for Policy Studies
September 20, 2005

Talking Points: “Stay the Course” or Get Out Now?

The death and destruction strewn by hurricane Katrina may equal or even exceed the death toll of U.S. soldiers in the Iraq War. But while 6,000 miles separates the two, the links between war overseas and the fate of those in Katrina’s wake are closely interwoven.

The cost of having over 6,000 National Guardsmen stationed from Mississippi and Louisiana far overseas in Iraq hampered a quick response to the horrific aftermath of hurricane Katrina.

While the President was quick to note that 60 percent of the Guard remain in the States, he failed to note that many who have been drawn to the frontlines in New Orleans are just home from serving in Iraq where the average tour for a Guardsman is 420 days. These brave men and women have returned from the battlefield and are now being called upon once again into service.

Not only are Guardmembers in Iraq, much of their equipment is too. Louisiana National Guard Lt. Colonel Pete Schneider told reporters in early August 2005, “Dozens of high water vehicles, humvees, refuelers and generators” used by the Louisiana Guard are tied up abroad. Schneider forbode, “The National Guard needs that equipment back home to support the homeland security mission.”

Just as Katrina has awoken Americans to the costs associated at home while we fight a war in Iraq, Cindy Sheehan’s August vigil outside President Bush’s ranch brought the human cost of the war into our living rooms.

The Iraq war has taken the lives of more than 1,900 U.S. troops and up to 100,000 Iraqis. It has cost over \$204 billion and the costs keep increasing.

Sixty percent of the American public disapproves of Bush’s handling of Iraq, 60% don’t believe the war has been worth the cost, and recent polls indicate that 55% of the public want to bring all or some of the troops home now.

Why not get out right now? Won’t a U.S. withdrawal mean violence and civil war?

The U.S. occupation isn’t bringing security to Iraq. It is a source of insecurity. U.S. military actions are responsible for most of the Iraqi killed and wounded since the U.S. invasion. The armed resistance is a direct result of the U.S. presence.

Iraqis, like people everywhere, do not want to live under foreign occupation. Yet the Bush administration refuses to commit to any “exit strategy” whatsoever. Instead it is constructing permanent military bases and refuses to say that U.S. troops will ever completely withdraw. This is a recipe for never-ending violence, not stability.

The divisions between Sunni and Shiite Muslims and between Arabs and Kurds are not being lessened by military occupation. Leaders in all of these communities condemn sectarian violence and inter-ethnic strife. But they cannot successfully negotiate their differences as long as the U.S. holds ultimate power.

But didn't the Iraqi election mean that the U.S. is bringing democracy to Iraq?

In national elections, Iraqis took the valiant step of voting in order to change the course of events. While the jubilation in the streets was very real, it masked another reality—exit polls indicated that more than two-thirds of the Shi'ites wanted U.S. forces out of Iraq either immediately or once the elected government is in place.

The country is on the brink of ripping apart over a constitution process that was designed by the United States. Far too little attention has been given to creating space for a national dialogue and far too much focus has been on politics at the national level. And there has been little input from Iraqi citizens in the process and far too much influence by the U.S.

Plus, the new Iraqi government doesn't really hold power in its own country. One hundred laws put in place by former U.S. administrator Paul Bremer are still in force and Iraqis have little say over U.S. troops and operations. Iraqis want democracy and self-determination. Neither exists under occupation.

Still, doesn't the U.S. have an obligation to stay and help the Iraqi people?

The U.S. has both a moral and legal responsibility to help reconstruct Iraq. But continuing military occupation prevents rather than helps fulfill this obligation.

Most Iraqis - and most people in the world - believe that George Bush is more interested in controlling Iraqi oil than helping Iraqis. The indefinite presence of U.S. troops reinforces this belief. So does the fact that only a small proportion of the money allotted to reconstruction has been spent - while U.S. companies like Halliburton and Bechtel make millions.

The Iraqi people are capable of rebuilding their country. The U.S. should supply funds, and support international expertise if requested. But control must be in the hands of the Iraqis.

Won't getting out of Iraq bring an increase in terrorism?

A new report by the Saudi Arabian government and an Israeli think tank found that the majority of foreign fighters are not former terrorists and instead became radicalized by the war itself—a troubling statistic given that the Bush administration's goal for the war is to stem future terrorism. The CIA-affiliated National Intelligence Council declares that “Iraq has replaced Afghanistan as the training ground for the next generation of ‘professionalized’ terrorists.”

Data collected by the State Department and the National Counterterrorism Center confirms this analysis. The number of “significant” terrorist attacks in 2004 reached 655, three times the previous record of 175 in 2003. Terrorist incidents inside Iraq also increased by a factor of nine—from 22 attacks in 2003 to 198 in 2004.

The longer the U.S. occupies Iraq, the more resentment builds against the U.S., increasing the danger of terrorism. The best way to reduce this danger is to get out now.

Won't announcing a withdrawal undermine and demoralize U.S. troops?

Attacks on U.S. troops in Iraq average several hundred each week. Frightened young GI's are shooting first, asking questions later. The best way to support the troops is to get them out of a situation where they are killing and being killed for no good reason. Iraq Veterans Against the War says: “We, the veterans of the war, now know...the reasons for invading the sovereign country of Iraq were false, and we have paid a heavy price for these lies....We call upon our President, the Congress, and all elected officials to immediately and unconditionally withdraw all U.S. troops from Iraq and the Middle East.”

Won't setting a timetable for withdrawal allow resistance fighters to “wait it out”?

Setting a time and date for withdrawal to start will likely decrease much of the strength of the resistance. The resistance is comprised of more than 40 different groups-many of them are united only by the U.S. presence and occupation. By removing their chief recruiting tool, the occupation, most will be weakened. Foreign fighters, numbering no more than a few thousand, and a handful of hard core Baathist groups will remain but as they are increasingly isolated, more and more Iraqis will turn against them, limiting their strength and power.



Quick Facts

These numbers were compiled August 30, 2005. In human and financial terms, *the cost of war continues to rise every day.*

Human toll

U.S. military killed in Iraq: 1,882

Number of U.S. troops wounded in combat since the war began: 14,120

Iraqi police and military deaths: 2,945

Iraqi civilians killed: Estimates range from 23,589-100,000

Financial burden

Estimated cost of war to date to every U.S. citizen: \$727

Average monthly cost of the Vietnam War, adjusted for inflation: \$5.1 billion

Average monthly cost of the Iraq War: \$5.6 billion

Amount that military contractor Halliburton has been awarded in contracts: \$10 billion

The bill so far: \$204.4 billion

What \$204.4 billion could have paid for in the U.S. for one year:

- Affordable housing units: 1.8 million or
- Scholarships for university students: 40 million or
- Head Start slots for a year: 27 million

What \$204.4 billion could have paid for around the globe for three years:

- Full funding for global anti-hunger efforts for and
- Full funding of world-wide AIDS programs for and
- Full funding for every child in the world for basic immunizations

Soldiers abroad

Number of U.S. soldiers in Iraq: 138,000

Number of “Coalition of the Willing” soldiers in Iraq: 23,000

Number of Private Military Contractors in Iraq: 20,000 - 25,000

Number of troops who have served two or more tours in Iraq: 341,000 (1/3rd of total)

Why General James Helmly, the Army Reserve's commander, told the Pentagon in December 2004 his men were "degenerating into a broken force":

- Number of U.S. soldiers in Iraq who are Guard members or Reservists: 4 out of 10
- Average time of mobilization for National Guard: 460 days
- Status of Army National Guard Recruitment: 23 percent short of yearly goal
- Percentage of reserve troops who earn lower salaries while on deployment: 30-40%
- Percentage of U.S. police departments missing officers due to Iraq deployments: 44%

Continued resistance

Number of resistance fighters in Iraq:

- November 2003 estimate: 5,000 fighters
- August 2005 estimate: 16,000 - 40,000 fighters and 200,000 Iraqi sympathizers

Average number of attacks by Iraqi resistance per day:

- July 2004: 47
- July 2005: 70

What the Iraq war has created, according to the U.S. National Intelligence Council:

“a training and recruitment ground (for terrorists), and an opportunity for terrorists to enhance their technical skills.”

Effect on al Qaeda of the Iraq War, according to International Institute for Strategic Studies:
“Accelerated recruitment”



Sample Resolution

The full text of all available Bring the Troops Home city council resolutions is available at http://citiesforprogress.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=111/. Below is the text of one of the most recent resolutions available:

Chicago, IL

RESOLUTION URGING CESSATION OF COMBAT OPERATIONS

IN IRAQ AND THE RETURN OF U.S. TROOPS

WHEREAS, The Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002 was passed by the U.S. Congress on October 11, 2002, and that Public Law 107-243 cited Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction as a primary reason for the use of United States Armed Forces against Iraq; and

WHEREAS, On January 12, 2005, President Bush officially declared an end to the search for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, The United States initiated combat operations in Iraq on March 19, 2003; and

WHEREAS, Hundreds of thousands of members of the United States Armed Forces have served with honor and distinction in Iraq; and

WHEREAS, More than 1,700 members of the United States Armed Forces have been killed and more than 12,000 members of the Armed Forces have been wounded in substantially accomplishing the stated purpose of the United States of giving the people of Iraq a reasonable opportunity to decide their own future; and

WHEREAS, The United States military occupation of Iraq has placed significant strains on the capacity of the United States Armed Forces, both active duty and reserve and the National Guard.

WHEREAS, The armed forces of Iraq number more than 76,000 troops as of June 8, 2005, and are growing in number and capability daily; and

WHEREAS, The forces of the Iraqi Interior Ministry number more than 92,000 personnel as of June 8, 2005, and are growing in number and capability daily; and

WHEREAS, More than \$200 billion has been appropriated by Congress to fund military operations and reconstruction in Iraq, and Chicago residents' share now exceeds \$2.1 billion; and

WHEREAS, The funds spent by Chicago taxpayers on the war and occupation in Iraq could have provided Head Start for one year for 238,056 children; or medical insurance for one year for 1,076,242 children; or 31,147 public school teachers for one year; or 16,183 additional housing units, according to the National Priorities Project; and

WHEREAS, The war and continued occupation have resulted in the devastation of Iraq's physical and social infrastructure and led to widespread and continuous resistance to U.S. occupation that threatens the lives of Iraqi civilians and the men and women who compose the ranks of U.S. and other occupying forces; and

WHEREAS, The presence of United States forces in Iraq and the alleged torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and other facilities have inflamed anti-American passions in the Muslim world and increased the terrorist threat to United States citizens, both at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, Polls show that less than half of the American people support the war; and

WHEREAS, Illinois Congresspersons Rush, Lipinski, Emanuel, Davis, Schakowsky, Jackson, Gutierrez, and Costello joined more than 100 other Congresspersons in voting for a House resolution on an Iraq exit strategy; and

WHEREAS, On January 2003, the Chicago City Council passed a resolution 47-1 opposing the war in Iraq prior to its commencing in March 2003; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Chicago, on behalf of the citizens of Chicago, urges the United States government to immediately commence an orderly and rapid withdrawal of United States military personnel from Iraq; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City Council of Chicago, recognizing that the stability of Iraq is crucial to the security of the citizens of Chicago and to all Americans, urges the United States government to provide the people of Iraq with all necessary non-military material aid as shall be necessary for the security of Iraq's citizens and for the rebuilding of Iraq; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the financial resources used to prosecute the war be redirected to address the urgent needs of America's great urban centers and the most vulnerable portions of our population, including health, education, and homeland security; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution shall be sent to George W. Bush, President of the United States, and the members of the Illinois Congressional delegation.



Sample Petitions

Sample Petition 1: Peace Pledge Chicago

Available online at: http://peacepledgechicago.org/files/city_council_resolution_petition.pdf

BRING THE TROOPS HOME NOW

Petition for the Chicago City Council to Pass a Resolution for Full U.S. Withdrawal from Iraq

We, the undersigned, request that the Chicago City Council pass a resolution calling for: immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops, no permanent U.S. military installations in Iraq, and an end to U.S. control of the Iraqi economy.

Our reasons are:

- The justifications for the invasion were false and violated the public trust.
- Iraq presented no threat to the U.S. at the time of the invasion and the U.S. war violates international law.
- All reasonable diplomatic options were not exhausted.
- Iraq's infrastructure has been devastated and thousands of Iraqis have been killed.
- The war on Iraq has had a negative impact on the U.S. and the City of Chicago.
- The death toll of U.S. soldiers and Iraqis continues to mount; 70 U.S. troops from Illinois have died.
- The U.S. government has spent almost \$200 billion on the war in Iraq while the U.S. deficit climbs.
- Astronomical military spending steals from Chicagoans through cuts in social programs.
- As of 2/05, the cost of the war to the City of Chicago was \$2.1 billion.

This money could have funded:

- 83,601 4-year scholarships at public universities,
- Health insurance for 1,032,648 Chicago children,
- 228,414 Head Start students for one year,
- 29,886 public school teachers for one year
- 15,572 housing units in Chicago

Name _____

Address _____

City/State _____

Telephone (optional) _____

E-Mail (optional) _____

Sample Petition 2: Vermont Network on Iraq War Resolutions

Available online at:

http://iraqresolution.org/petition1_page.html

We the undersigned legal voters of the Town of _____ request the Selectboard to place the following article on the warning for the Annual Town Meeting to be held on March 1, 2005:

Article __. Shall the voters of the Town of _____ vote to approve the resolution concerning the war in Iraq and the deployment of members of the Vermont National Guard in that war, as attached to the petition and incorporated herein by reference, and then send a copy of the resolution to Vermont's state and federal office-holders? (A copy of the full resolution can be viewed at iraqresolution.org or at the Town Clerk's office.)

Printed Name _____ Signature _____ Address _____



Sample Letters to the Editor

The activists and local officials below used letters to the editor to bring attention to their campaigns to pass Bring the Troops Home resolutions in their local communities.

Morning Call (Allentown, Pennsylvania)

May 21, 2005 Saturday

The news is filled with stories about political filibusters and celebrity nonsense.

Meanwhile, Iraq has become old news even though the casualty rate continues to escalate. According to a coalition Web site, more than 1,600 U.S. troops have been killed and many more severely injured. These are mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers of your neighbors. Wake up! Support our troops. Send them home!

Eric Humes
New Tripoli

Tulsa World (Oklahoma)

January 30, 2005 Sunday

The Bush administration recently called off its hunt for Iraqi weapons of mass destruction. It found no WMDs, which acknowledges what Bush was told by the U.N. weapons inspectors before invading Iraq.

No hard evidence was ever found to justify the cost of about 1,400 Americans who have been killed in Iraq so far, or the countless thousands of Americans who will never be the same physically or mentally, or the tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians Bush killed, or the loss of world support for America.

Mr. Bush says he has no regrets.

Our troops have done their job. Now resentment of our presence in Iraq promotes violence rather than stability and our troops serve mainly as human targets. It is time to start taking our troops out and let them return to their families. To do this we will need to work with other nations to provide more of an international force to help Iraq gain stability. Our kids should no longer bear the primary burden.

We want to support the troops. But we can't support the troops if they are dead.
Doug Long, Rio Rancho, N.M.

The Berkshire Eagle (Pittsfield, Massachusetts)

June 24, 2005 Friday

To the Editor of The Eagle:

Oct. 19, 2004, two weeks before last November's election, an AP headline read: "Bush doesn't see longtime presence in Iraq."

Today, June 18, 2005, an AP headline reads: "Bush: Pulling out of Iraq not an option."

There are two things especially interesting about Bush's June 18 in his weekly radio address.

First, he admitted that his mission had been to remove Hussein, one to which -- had he been honest about it -- he could never have gotten the U.N. or other countries, or perhaps the U.S. Congress, to agree.

Second, Bush was responding to a resolution introduced in Congress by both Republican and Democratic lawmakers calling for removal of U.S. troops in Iraq to begin by Oct. 1, 2006. That's right; not October of 2005, but October of 2006. Bush's response: Withdrawal is not an option.

Remember when officials in the Bush administration kept saying and hinting they hoped to be out of Iraq within "months, not years." Rumsfeld expressed the same hope -- as a prediction -- at the beginning of the war in Afghanistan. The war in Afghanistan started on Oct. 7, 2001, the war in Iraq on March 19, 2003. The "mission accomplished" ceremony on the USS Abraham Lincoln in which Bush celebrated the end to "major combat" was May 1, 2003. But both wars have lasted years, not just months. And Oct., 2006 is too early -- says Bush -- for Americans to expect the beginning of the phase-down of U.S. troops in Iraq.

Had the mission in Iraq been the removal of weapons of mass destruction -- as we were told -- we could have left Iraq after a few months, because by that time it was apparent there were no WMDs. But that was not the mission. Bush's real mission was to remove Hussein and set up a regime favorable to U.S. rich folk.

To begin reducing our troops in Iraq in October of 2006 is unacceptable. The occupation should end immediately, and the withdrawal of U.S. troops completed quickly. Iraqis are desirous and capable of taking care of Iraq.

George Desnoyers
Pittsfield

The Post and Courier (Charleston, SC)

January 8, 2005 Saturday

Bring troops home

Regarding the war in Iraq, however the election in Iraq turns out, I suggest to President George W. Bush that he declare victory and pull out our troops. Iraq is a nation of approximately 25 million people. It had no air force or navy to speak of. It had no weapons of mass destruction and even if it developed them it had no way to send them 7,000 miles to America. In short, we should not have invaded them. It was a stupid decision to do so. We might have to stay in Iraq 10 to 20 years to secure it from its enemies. Just think of the cost and the casualties we would incur if we stayed that long.

I am a veteran of World War II. I spent five years in the China, Burma, India area. During my service, I received a battlefield promotion from sergeant to lieutenant. I have been there. I know what war is like.

William H. Sharpe, Sr.
6 Cavalier Ave.

The Augusta Chronicle (Georgia)

June 10, 2005 Friday

In Short, Bring Troops Home

It is time to start calling for U.S. troops to be removed from Iraq and Afghanistan in particular, but also anywhere else in the world.

William E. Veal
North Augusta, S.C.



Supporting Reading

Reports

“The Iraq Quagmire: The Mounting Costs of War and the Case for Bringing Home the Troops,”
by Phyllis Bennis and Erik Leaver

The Institute for Policy Studies, August 31, 2005

Available online at: <http://www.fpif.org/fpiftxt/467>

“Executive Excess 2005: Defense Contractors Get More Bucks for the Bang” by Sarah
Anderson, John Cavanagh, Scott Klinger, and Liz Stanton

The Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy, Aug. 30, 2005

Available online at: http://www.faireconomy.org/press/2005/EE2005_pr.html

News and opinion

“Bringing the troops home,” Sue Schell

Speech to Evanston City Council, Sept. 12, 2005

Available online at:

http://citiesforprogress.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109

“Why I am Camping Out in Crawford, Texas,” Cindy Sheehan

Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel, August 13, 2005.

Available online at:

<http://www.jsonline.com/news/editorials/aug05/348021.asp?format=print>

“Iraq: The Human Toll” by David Cortright

The Nation, July 24, 2005

Available online at: <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20050801/cortright>

“The July Fourth Covenant,” by Marcus Raskin

TomPaine.com, July 1, 2005

Available online at:

http://www.tompaine.com/articles/20050701/a_july_4th_covenant.php

“Tipping Point Iraq,” by Phyllis Bennis

The Institute for Policy Studies, June 27, 2005

Available online at: <http://www.ips-dc.org/comment/Bennis/tp31tipping.htm>



Online Resources

United For Peace and Justice

<http://www.unitedforpeace.org/>

Code Pink

<http://www.codepink4peace.org/>

DC Anti-War Network

<http://www.dawndc.net/>

After Downing Street

<http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/>

Bring Them Home Now

<http://www.bringthemhomenow.org/>

Peace Pledge Chicago

<http://peacepledgechicago.org/>

Global Exchange

<http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/mideast/iraq/>

Vermont Network on Iraq War Resolutions

<http://iraqresolution.org/>

The National Priorities Project: Cost of War

<http://costofwar.com/>

Foreign Policy In Focus

<http://www.fpif.org/index.htm>

Institute for Policy Studies

<http://www.ips-dc.org/>