

# A PEOPLE'S PETITION FOR AN IRAQ PEACE PROCESS

Near the beginning of the Iraq War, NCSEC passed a resolution protesting America's involvement. Two years later over 1900 American soldiers have been killed and many more times that Iraqi military and civilians.

In a public forum on October 10 a panel discussion was held on 'How Do We Get Out of Iraq'. Many of the ideas heard there are found in a petition developed by the Progressive Democrats of America in a 5-step plan for bringing American troops home and ending our involvement in the war. This plan is presented in the form of a petition to our elected officials.

Out of concern for the continuing loss of life and the lack of any exit strategy for leaving Iraq, a special meeting was held on October 23, 2005 to debate and endorse a position on ending the war in Iraq. Through the process of consensus the petition was debated and approved. The results were made known to the North Carolina representatives in Washington

## **We propose the following principles as essential to ending the war in Iraq:**

**First**, as a confidence-building measure, the U.S. government must declare that it has no interest in permanent military bases or the control of Iraqi oil or other resources.

**Second**, as a further confidence-building measure, the U.S. government must set goals for ending the occupation and bringing all our troops home - in months, not years, beginning with an initial withdrawal of troops by the end of this year.

**Third**, the U.S. government must request that the United Nations monitor the process of military disengagement and de-escalation, and organize a peaceful reconstruction effort. The U.S. must accept its obligation to fairly compensate Iraqis for damages, assist Iraqi reconstruction, cease the imposition of privatization schemes, and end the dominance of U.S. contractors in the bidding process.

**Fourth**, the U.S. government should appoint a peace envoy independent of the occupation authorities to underscore its commitment to an entirely different mission, that of a peace process ending the occupation and returning our soldiers home.

**Fifth**, the peace envoy should encourage and cooperate in talks with Iraqi groups opposed to the occupation, including insurgents, to explore a political settlement. The settlement must include representation of opposition forces and parties, and power-sharing and the protection of women's rights as core principles of governance and economic and energy development. We believe such an initiative will reduce, though not eliminate, violence by lessening any rationale for Jihadist or sectarian conflict.

We send this message to all Americans in civil society, to our elected officials, and to the global peace movement. We demand that Congressional hearings begin to define an exit strategy now. We demand that members of Congress, reflecting the will of the people, adopt policy and budget initiatives that call for an exit strategy based on the above principles. We demand a peace envoy, peace talks with the opposition, reconstruction, the closure of U.S. bases, and the safe return home of all U.S. troops.