



# An Open Letter to President George W. Bush Regarding a Path to Victory in Iraq: Plan B

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A clear-eyed view of the facts and understanding the desires of the Iraqi people are essential to fulfilling the moral obligation the United States took on when we invaded. To the extent possible, that means ensuring that the region is no less stable due to US military operations.

Your legacy could still be ridding the world of Saddam Hussein without inflicting instability on the region. But your *stay-the-course* plan of our military attempting to impose the status quo of a unified Iraq has been disastrous. My eyes swell whenever the TV flashes faces of our beautiful young soldiers and marines senselessly killed by Islamist terrorists – as you continue your *stay-the-course* plan.

This failed strategy must change now! If not now, it will terminate for sure in 2008, no matter which Party wins the Presidency.

To continue this *stay-the-course* plan is unthinkable. Yet exiting Iraq must come because of success, not failure, since enormous ramifications would ensue if we were to withdraw prematurely. An exit because of failure would hand Iraq over to the Islamist terrorists and likely precipitate a regional war.

So please look carefully at another option, the Yugoslavian model. Yugoslavia's recent history is a clear parallel to the ethnic sectarian violence that has occurred since Saddam Hussein's removal. Like Iraq, Yugoslavia was an unnatural grouping of regions with a long history of sectarian and ethnic conflict – a collection of six regional republics roughly divided along ethnic lines.

Yugoslavia's potential sectarian violence had been held in check by Josip Tito, a ruthless dictator who ruled the country from 1945 until his death in May of 1980, at which time the country began the process of breaking apart.

Like Yugoslavia, Iraq was an unnatural state consisting of peoples who had no desire to exist together as one country. Created under the auspices of the League

of Nations following WWI, Iraq did not exist until 1921. Absent a tyrannical dictator, the Shias, Sunnis, and Kurds cannot co-exist as a unified country, other than as a loose federation.

## Plan B: The 3-state Solution

The 3-state plan discussed here does not involve dismemberment of Iraq.

**The task now is to manage the devolution of Iraq into a 'confederal state' in which Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish regions would govern themselves with substantial autonomy.**

*- Henry Kissinger*

It proposes separate states formed into a single republic for common defense, oil revenue allocation, some degree of sharing wealth through a tax mechanism, and other common concerns.

The Iraqi Constitution provides for autonomous regions (Shias, Sunnis, and Kurdish states within the Iraq Republic).

Last October the Iraqi Parliament passed implementing legislation envisioning an 18-month transition period, and recognizing that the process of evolving into three autonomous regions is already underway.



Baghdad, the confederation capitol, could contain three sectors, each policed by individual forces. Advanced in 2003 by Leslie Gelb, President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and in 2004 by Peter Galbraith, former Ambassador to Croatia, this plan has long been championed by Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE).

Republican Senators warming to this option include Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R-TX), Presidential candidate Sen. Sam Brownback (R-KS), and Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN).

## Iraq Study Group Report

The Iraq Study Group Report (ISG) acknowledges that: **"devolution is a possible consequence of continued instability in Iraq."**

It then goes on to report, "If events were to move irreversibly in this direction, the United States should manage the situation to ameliorate humanitarian consequences, contain the spread of violence, and minimize regional instability. The United States should support as much as possible central control by governmental authorities in Baghdad, particularly on the question of oil revenues."

**This is now the case.** The process of Iraq devolving into separate states is well under-

way, with three relatively homogeneous regions – a Shiite region in the South, a Sunni region in the North, and a Kurdish region in the Northeast. Massive population relocation is on-going.

To date, sixteen percent of the Sunni and Shiite population has left Iraq or been displaced within the country. The Iraqi constitution and the law recently passed by the Iraqi Parliament acknowledge this fact, with the law defining how devolution into three regions could advance.

Henry Kissinger recently said: *The task now is to manage the devolution of Iraq into a 'confederal state' in which Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish regions would govern themselves with substantial autonomy. The massive killings experienced in Bosnia prior to the Dayton Accords can be avoided if we immediately begin the course suggested by Dr. Kissinger.*

The costs of *staying the course* of an American military imposing the status quo of a unified Iraq with central control, and a guarantee of territorial integrity would be too high: too high in terms of loss of American lives, loss of Iraqi lives, squandering of resources, devastating our military.

Even Republican support for the *surge* is evaporating, and will be essentially lost by this fall, unless you shift military assets to support Plan B – the three-state confederation spelled out in the Iraqi Constitution, and approved by eighty percent of the Iraqi people.

It is now clear that the minimalist approach we took to this war was wrong. A

force of three-hundred to four-hundred thousand troops would have been required for victory – to late for that now. As the greatest military power in the history of the World, we should still be able to achieve victory. But the measures required would not be politically possible, would not be tolerated by the American people. For example, we might conduct massive carpet bombing over volatile Diyala province, Fallujah, and elsewhere, turning Islamist strongholds into parking lots. But this could be likened morally to Hiroshima, and destroying infrastructure would run counter to our objective of rebuilding the country.

So at this point, the 3-state model is the only viable option. It is certainly better than cutting and running as we did in Viet Nam. That would surely be the outcome, when Congress takes the decision to cut funding. I wish to conclude this letter with the words of Dr. Hubertus Hoffmann, President and Founder of the World Security Network:

*"American foreign policy must finally recognize that its policy of establishing a strong central power in Baghdad has, after four years, completely failed and cannot be implemented even with maximum utilization of the available U.S. troops. The extreme American focus on centralization of power in Baghdad must be rapidly replaced by the logic of regionalization ...*

*... as Senator Biden has rightly and continuously called for. The U.S. could, through a pullback into Kurdistan, at least realize a partial victory in Iraq and protect a territory in which Moslems and Christians have lived together peacefully for thousands of years – an example for the rest of Iraq and also for its problematic neighbors Iran and Syria."*

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