

"This is a sovereign nation... If they were to say, leave, we would leave."

—George W. Bush (May 24, 2007)

Dear Friend of Peace,

U.S. leaders have recognized Iraq as sovereign and repeatedly pledged to withdraw American troops if asked. Accordingly, an online petition posted on IraqTheVote.org seeks to end the war by calling for a vote of the people most affected by it: Iraqi citizens.

Over 70% of Iraqis oppose the presence of coalition troops, yet the U.S. government has advocated a "long-term presence." If you feel that Iraqi citizens deserve to be heard, please sign the IraqTheVote.org petition and encourage others to do so. The petition text is simple:

We, the undersigned, affirm that Iraq is a sovereign nation, and we respectfully call upon the Iraqi government to include, in its next national election, a referendum item letting citizens vote on whether they want coalition troops to leave Iraq. We also call upon U.S. leaders to pledge that if a majority of voting Iraqis favor a troop withdrawal, U.S. forces will be withdrawn as specified in the referendum.

In its first few weeks, the petition has already been signed by over 2,500 people, including Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winners, Middle East scholars, and more than 1,400 other professors. Why so much support? Because the petition combines three factual propositions that together have the potential to end the Iraq War:

- ❶ Iraq is a sovereign nation.
- ❷ Iraq has the right to ask foreign troops to leave.
- ❸ Most Iraqis want foreign troops to leave.

President Bush has already said that Iraq is sovereign and that the U.S. would withdraw troops if asked (points #1-2 above). Consequently, the petition calls for a referendum to let Iraqi citizens vote whether to make such a request.

In 2005 Iraq successfully held a referendum on its constitution, thereby laying the groundwork for this follow-up referendum. Moreover:

- ✓ Iraq has elections scheduled in 2009, so adding a referendum is feasible.
- ✓ The United Nations is already authorized to assist Iraq with referendums.
- ✓ A referendum is nonpartisan, nonsectarian, and democratic.

If the U.S. is serious about building democracy in Iraq, there is no better way than to let Iraqis determine their future. For further details or to sign the petition, please visit IraqTheVote.org.