



Citizens Tool Kit on Iraq

How to Make the Iraq War an Issue in November

Welcome to Win Without War's Citizens Tool Kit - a resource to help you be an ACTIVE participant in the election of your next representative to Congress.

Too often, elections are about slogans, attack ads and empty rhetoric. But, they can also be about issues and critically important choices about our future. This Citizens Tool Kit is designed to help those who want THIS election to be about one of the most important issues facing our country - the war in Iraq.

Whether it's talking to Uncle Bob at the dinner table, talking to colleagues at work or attending a candidate forum, we want you to be prepared to talk about the Iraq war. We also want you to know how you can make your voice heard through grassroots and media activities that are designed to reach voters in your community.

While the Win Without War coalition has opposed the Bush administration's Iraq policy since before the U.S. invasion, we are a non-partisan organization and do not endorse candidates for public office. We ARE, however, committed to strong citizen participation in the upcoming election and for making the war in Iraq an important issue in the debate. People need to know where the candidates stand on this important issue and how they can make a difference this election year. The Citizens Tool Kit is designed to help you do just that!

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FACTS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Iraq Fact Sheet

Costs of the Iraq War

More than three years after invading Iraq and toppling Saddam Hussein, the costs for America continue to grow - More than 2,500 U.S. soldiers killed and 18,000 wounded in action¹ and to date, more than \$320 billion of U.S. taxpayer dollars spent on operations in Iraq, which equates to \$8 billion a month, \$ 2 billion a week and \$267 million a day².

Violence escalates and claims more Iraqi lives. According to a recent report issued by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, the total number of Iraqi civilians killed in the first six months of 2006 was more than 14,338, including 5,818 killed in May and June³. The Iraqi Ministry of Health report on June 25th that at least 50,000 Iraqis have died violently since the 2003 invasion⁴.

Economists estimate actual cost of the war will rise to \$2 trillion. With the raising costs of combat operations, veterans disability and medical treatment payments, and replacement military equipment, economists at Columbia and Harvard have estimated that the true cost of the war could total as much as \$2 trillion, \$10,000 for every household in the U.S.⁵

Growing Insurgency and Sectarian Violence

Terrorist attacks have increased exponentially. The number of reported terrorist attacks has increased exponentially in the three years since the United States invaded Iraq. Since 2003, the number of terrorist attacks increased by over 5,000%, with a 2,000% increase in the number of deaths. There were 11,111 terrorist attacks that caused 14,602 deaths in 2005, compared to 208 terrorist attacks that caused 625 deaths in 2003.⁶

Insurgency continues to grow. Despite more than 200 operations to defeat Iraq's insurgents and terrorist organizations during the last three years, the Iraqi insurgents and foreign fighters have only, and the violence increased⁷:

¹ Iraq Coalition Casualty Count

² Congressional Research Service Report, 6/14/06.

³ UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, Human Rights Report, 5/1-6/30/06

⁴ "War's Iraqi Death Toll Tops 50,000" *Los Angeles Times* 6/25/06

⁵ "The Economic Costs of the Iraq War" Dr. Joseph Stiglitz, Columbia University, and Professor Linda Bilmes, Harvard University

⁶ State Department National Counterterrorism Center Report, April 2006

⁷ Brookings Institution, "Iraq Index: Tracking Variables of Reconstruction & Security in Post-Saddam Iraq" 8/3/06

- **Four-fold growth on insurgency since 2003.** The estimate size of the insurgency grew from 5,000 to more than 20,000, with no signs of Iraq's insurgency decreasing.
- **Foreign terrorists and fighters remain in Iraq.** The number of foreign terrorists and fighters increased substantially from 2003 to 2006. The estimated number of foreign fighters grew from 300-500 in early 2004 and 800-2000 in June 2006.

Iraqi civilian death toll rises to more than 100 per day. The United Nations reports that during the month of June an average of more than 100 civilians per day were killed in Iraq. As result of growing sectarian violence, the civilian death toll jumped more than 77 percent during the first six months of 2006 - from 1,778 in January to 3,149 in June.⁸

Corruption

Iraq is losing \$4 billion a year to corruption. "Corruption in Iraq is endemic. We call it a pandemic," said Stuart Bowen, special inspector general to Iraq, before a Senate committee in August.⁹

- **Iraqis have to bribe local officials for basic services.** According to poll conducted by the inspector general, one-third of Iraqis said they had to pay bribes to get basic services.

Inspector general audit find \$300 million taxpayer dollars spent on faulty reconstruction projects. U.S. investigators have identified more than \$300 million that have been faulty reconstruction projects. Currently, 82 investigations of American government officials and contractors working in Iraq are now underway.¹⁰

One-tenth of Halliburton's expenses in Iraq considered "questionable." Military contractor Halliburton has been awarded \$10.8 billion in contracts and \$1.4 billion of Halliburton expenditures in Iraq are considered "questionable" and "unsupported" by Senate investigators.¹¹

Iraq War is Undermining U.S. National Security

Growing instability in Afghanistan. The situation in Afghanistan witnessed a serious deterioration in the first six months of 2006 with a resurgence of attacks by the Taliban and Al Qaeda. Violence in Afghanistan has been at its worse since 2001, and NATO accounts diverted attention and resources to the war in Iraq created a security vacuum in Afghanistan.¹²

Iraq war has contributed to a decline in the quantity of Army recruits, military forced to extend tours of U.S. soldiers. The U.S. Army fell short of its recruitment goals by more than 6,000 recruits. With an upsurge of sectarian violence, the Bush administration announced in the

⁸ "Iraqi Death Toll Rises Above 100 Per Day, U.N. Says" *New York Times*, 7/19/06

⁹ "Corruption Rivals Violence As Threat to Iraq" *ABC News*, 8/2/06

¹⁰ "Corruption Rivals Violence As Threat to Iraq" *ABC News*, 8/2/06

¹¹ Institute for Policy Studies, "Hot facts from the Iraq Quagmire: The Mounting Costs of the Iraq War" March 2006

¹² "World underestimated resurgent Taliban, NATO says" *Reuters*, 6/29/06

July that it would extend the tours of 4,000 U.S. soldiers.¹³

National Guard is incapacitated because of the war and lack of funding. Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, testified before Congress in August that more than two-thirds of the Army National Guard's brigades are not combat-ready primarily because of a \$21 billion shortfall in equipment - most of it lost in the war. According to the Associated Press, "The budget won't allow the military to complete the personnel training and equipment repairs and replacement that must be done when units return home after deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan. I am further behind or in an even more dire situation than the active Army, but we both have the same symptoms, I just have a higher fever." Blum said.¹⁴

The bipartisan 9/11 Commission gave the administration and Congress failing grades in homeland security. In the 9/11 Commission's final report, the federal government received failing grades. "The Bush administration and Congress have balked at enacting numerous reforms that could save American lives and prevent another terrorist attack on U.S. soil." The report card included 12 D's, 5 F's and two "incompletes."¹⁵

Falling Credibility in the World

Iraq is number one reason for America's lose of credibility in world. America's credibility in the world and global support for the war on terrorism has steadily and quickly fallen, even among our allies, since our invasion of Iraq. Our presence in Iraq is cited as the number one reason.¹⁶

Lack of a Clear Plan

GAO finds the administration's National Strategy for Victory lacking a clear plan. The U.S. Government Accountability Office recently found that the Bush Administration's "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" lacks a clear plan for implementing their strategy in Iraq and does not fully outline the current and future costs of executing it.¹⁷

Majority of U.S. troops support withdrawal. Over 72% of U.S. soldiers in Iraq believe that they've done all they can militarily and that our troops should leave Iraq within a year, and more than one in four say troops should leave immediately.¹⁸

Majority of Iraqis support a timetable for withdrawal. Asked what they would like the Iraqi government to ask the U.S.-led forces to do, 70% of Iraqis (83% Sunni, 71% Shia) favor setting a timeline for the withdrawal of U.S. forces.¹⁹

¹³ "Pentagon Extends Tour for Soldiers in Iraq" *New York Times*, 7/29/06

¹⁴ "Army Guard Units Said Not Combat Ready" *Washington Post*, 8/2/06

¹⁵ "U.S. Is Given Failing Grades by 9/11 Panel" *Washington Post*, 12/6/05

¹⁶ Pew Global Attitudes Project Poll, 6/13/06

¹⁷ U.S. Government Accountability Office Report "Rebuilding Iraq: More Comprehensive National Strategy Needed to Help Achieve U.S. Goals" July 2006

¹⁸ Zogby International poll, 2/28/06

SPEAKING UP!

How to Make Your Voice Heard this Election Season

Questions for Candidates and Incumbents

1. Do you support a phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq?
2. The war in Iraq is currently costing American taxpayers almost \$300 million a day, taking away from critical funding for our homeland security, healthcare, the education of our children and other priorities right here at home. What will you do to meet these needs?
3. U.S. investigators have identified more than \$300 million taxpayer dollars that have been spent on questionable reconstruction projects, and Halliburton has received \$50 billion in no-bid contracts despite being fined for overcharging the government. What steps will you take to prevent further fleecing of the American taxpayer? What are you going to do to hold the government accountable?
4. Congress recently voted to cut \$14 billion in funding for veterans healthcare over the next ten years and opposed giving the National Guard members and Reservists access to the Pentagon's health insurance. What will you do to stop this assault on services to our veterans?
5. Experts are reporting that Iraq is on the verge of a civil war and that many of the soldiers that the U.S. is training in Iraq are militia combatants contributing to the sectarian violence that, according to the United Nations, is taking the lives of an average of 100 Iraqi civilians a day. Should the U.S. be in the middle of a civil war in Iraq?
6. The Bush administration misled the country about weapons of mass destruction and the costs of invading Iraq. They also failed to prepare and our soldiers were sent into combat without the proper protection, leading to the unnecessary deaths and injuries of thousands of soldiers. What have you done as a Member of Congress to hold the administration accountable for devastating miscalculations? Or, what will you do to hold the administration accountable as a Member of Congress?
7. Six generals have called for the resignation of Secretary Rumsfeld. Given the failed policies that led us into the war in Iraq and a worsening situation for our troops on the ground without a clear plan for success, will you also ask for Rumsfeld to step down?

¹⁹Program on International Policy Attitudes Poll, "What the Iraqi Public Wants" 1/31/06

TAKE ACTION!

Grassroots How-To Guide

Bird-Dogging

- ✓ **What is Bird-dogging?** Bird-dogging is a tactic that many organizations, and concerned citizens, use to pressure candidates to take a public stance on an issue, or to question a stance that a candidate has already taken.
- ✓ **Locate the candidate.** One of the easiest ways to find out where a candidate will be is to join his or her email list, or to check the website of the candidate or the candidate's party. Your local media sources may also have a listing of where political candidates will appear.
- ✓ **Prepare your questions.** Look to Speaking Up! for suggestions on questions for candidates and incumbents on Iraq. At a town hall, it's imperative that you act quickly in getting your question heard so make sure once there's an opportunity for questions and answers that you're quick to raise your hand. When you ask a question, be prepared with a follow up question. If you have a group of people at the event, split them up. Dispersing at the event might allow everyone in the group to ask a different question.
- ✓ **Take notes.** Make sure you get an accurate quote of the candidate's response. It's always best if you can get the candidate's response on camera, but either way, having an accurate account of their response allows you to pass the information on.
- ✓ **Take to the streets.** You don't have to be limited to town halls. Follow the candidate or your Member to all of their public speaking events and continue asking your questions. You can hold up signs or grab the media's attention through creative ideas like dressing in a chicken costume if the candidate has refused, several times, to answer the question. Make your voice heard!
- ✓ **Keep it cordial.** Keep in mind that you are also likely to get more of a response from candidates, and make a positive impression on the media, if you are calm and respectful in your demeanor.

Hosting a House Parties

- ✓ **Why House Parties?** House parties are a great grassroots resource to get the word out to your family and friends. The objective to an effective house party is gathering people together to view a poignant documentary or an education resource that starts a dialogue around an important issue and motivates you and your guests to take action!
- ✓ **Get your materials.** There are several very engaging documentaries on Iraq. We've provided a list of the most recent films, along with a slideshow presentation on the Eyes

Wide Open exhibit. In October, "The Ground Truth" and "Iraq for Sale" will be organizing coordinated screenings in local communities to mark the authorization vote for the invasion of Iraq. You can visit their websites (<http://thegroundtruth.net> or <http://iraqforsale.bravenewtheaters.com/screenings>) for more information about screening in your community or to purchase the DVD to you can host your own house party. Send out your invitation and prepare refreshments and a sign-in sheet to record the names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of your guests.

✓ **The day of.** As your guests arrive, welcome them to your party and have them introduce themselves. Once everyone is comfortable, you will want to share the reasons why you were inspired to have the house party.

✓ **Screen the film or video presentation.**

✓ **Discuss.** After the movie is over, facilitate a discussion by asking people to share their thoughts on the film and the issues. The fact sheet can help supplement the discussion.

✓ **Take Action.** Use this grassroots guide for ideas on how you and your guests can take action in your community. Most importantly, make sure everyone is registered to vote: <https://ssl.capwiz.com/congressorg/e4/nvra>

Dropping Literature

✓ **What's a Lit Drop?** Literature drops are easy and inexpensive ways to conduct voter education and reach a large number of people.

✓ **Take it to the People.** Look to our Visuals sections for informational materials that you can hand out in your community. Position yourself in a busy area - like a college campus, office-building plaza, shopping center or transit stop - and cordially distribute the information. You can also go door-to-door in your community and leave the information on your neighbor's front step.

Organizing Peace Vigils

✓ **Why organize a peace vigil?** A peace vigil is a way of expressing a commitment to peace visibly in your community and in the world.

✓ **Organize a peace community.** You will need to find a few people who are committed to being part of your vigils. Look to local peace, political or religious organizations in your community to publicize your event.

✓ **Choose your location.** You want to be creative about the location that you choose. You want to find a public place where you'll be noticed, but the location can range from a local park to outside your Member's congressional district office.

✓ **Publicize the event.** Follow our media how-to guide on alerting the press about your event.

✓ **Take action.** Silent vigilers generally stand in a line or a circle with candles. Designate someone to quietly distribute leaflets or brochures to educate the participants and the public and consider having someone read the names of those that have died in the war, while the others remain silent.

TAKE ACTION!

Media How-To Guide

Writing Letters to the Editor

- ✓ **Think before you write.** To be effective, a letter to the editor should get a single point across. There may be several reasons WHY you feel the war in Iraq needs to end and the troops need to come home, but in writing a letter to the editor, focus on the strongest argument.
- ✓ **Focus.** To increase the likelihood of publication, focus on a timely and newsworthy story or editorial recently published in the paper. Larger papers often will not print "soapbox" letters. If you're responding to something published in the paper, identify it in the first sentence: "In arguing for..., your editorialist..." Your letter should say just one thing, possibly corrects the paper on one fact and cites two others to support your position, and it strongly expresses what you think.
- ✓ **Be Brief.** It's often helpful to write the first draft too short. Many writers find it easier to add than to cut - and the more work you make for the editor, the less likely your letter will be printed. Most publications will limit letters to the editor to a few hundred words, at the most. Focus is the key to force.
- ✓ **Be timely.** Newspapers are in the news business. When you're responding to an article or editorial, try to get your letter in when the original piece is still fresh in the audience's mind.

Crafting an Op-Ed

- ✓ **Expertise Needed.** Op-Eds are opinion-editorial pieces that present an informed view on a newsworthy topic, drawing on the author's insight and expertise, and commenting on timely news or issues. Facts, statistics and anecdotes help to shore up the argument and lend color.
- ✓ **Find an Expert.** In commenting on larger national issues in your community, the best resource for editorial pieces would be your community leaders, such as a religious leader commenting on the morality of war or a local official commenting on domestic constraints because of national budget priorities.
- ✓ **Take a Stand.** Op-Ed editors prefer submissions that are strong in their viewpoint. An op-ed is likely to be published if the stand or opinion is unique, rather than just adding to the chorus of similar viewpoints.
- ✓ **Be Concise.** Make your position clear from the beginning, keep your sentences short and be sure that your article ends with a forceful conclusion. The average Op-Ed is 800 words.

Calling Talk Radio

- ✓ **Know the Facts.** Before calling a talk radio program, go through the Tool Kit's Fact Sheet to study up on facts. You can print or write out your talking points to help you plan what you're going to say before you are on the air.
- ✓ **Call Early.** Call early in the show so you can be sure to be included in the program. Keep Calling. If the call-in line is busy, just keep redialing the number. You will get through, especially on a local program.
- ✓ **Get to the Point.** When you get through, be prepared to give the call screener a quick one-sentence summary of what you will say. The more clear and to-the-point you are, the better your chances of getting on air.
- ✓ **Be Clear and Concise.** Sounds upbeat and excited to be on the program. Get to your point quickly, and if you're referring to something another person has said, be sure to quickly summarize it for listeners who may not have heard it.

Holding a Press Event

- ✓ **Win Over the Media.** If you're holding a traditional press event, make sure it's interesting, newsworthy and that you're announcing timely information.
- ✓ **Build a Press List.** Once you have your hook, look up your local Associated Press bureau, your newspaper, TV and radio affiliates. Call them up, ask to talk to the newsroom and then ask for the best person to call, fax, or email the press advisory to.
- ✓ **Personalize the Media Advisory.** Send out an advisory listing the important details of your local event - the who, what, when, where and how - and your contact information so reporters can be in touch. If you'll have a cell phone with you on the day of the event, it's a good idea to put that in there.
- ✓ **Contact the Media with the Details.** Make initial phone calls to the media a few days before the event and let them know that you'll be faxing or emailing over a news advisory. With the TV stations, be sure that they get it on their weekly assignment calendar.
- ✓ **Place Follow-up Calls the Morning of the Event.**
- ✓ **Send out the Press Release.** You will use the press release to highlight the success of the event. In writing your press release, the first paragraph will contain the lead and the hook - the one thing that gets your audience, the media, interested in reading more. It will also explain the five Ws and will summarize the press release, while the following paragraphs will provide the detail.

In the body of the release, use the inverted pyramid, writing the most important information and quotes first. The closing paragraph should report the critical contact information, including the name of the person, his or her phone number and/or email address. Please feel free to look through the WWW Press Room (www.winwithoutwarus.org/press) for guidance.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

American Friends Service Committee's Eyes Wide Open Exhibit - Eyes Wide Open is AFSC's widely-acclaimed exhibition on the human costs of the Iraq War, featuring a pair of boots honoring each U.S. military casualty and a field of shoes and a Wall of Remembrance to memorialize the Iraqis killed in the conflict. The exhibit has traveled to over 70 cities across the country and may soon be visiting a location near you.

<http://www.afsc.org/eyes/>

The Ground Truth - This Focus Features documentary follows ordinary men and women who heeded the call for military service in Iraq, following them from their recruitment through their reintegration into society. Be part of "Ground Truth Gathering" week from October 4th - 11th as the nation marks the 4th anniversary of the congressional authorization vote for "use of force against Iraq." Local communities across the country will be taking part in individual screenings of "The Ground Truth" in churches to living rooms. Visit "The Ground Truth" website to view a trailer of the film and buy a copy of the DVD for your own house party.

<http://groundtruthstore.seenon.com/?pa=www>

Iraq for Sale: The War Profiteers - "Iraq for Sale" exposes the connections between private companies profiteering from the reconstruction of Iraq, the decision makers who allow them to do so, and the lives of everyday Americans that will be changed forever. Join Patriotism over Profit week, October 8th - 14th, and participate in a screening being hosted in your community or hold your own screening for your family and friends.

<http://iraqforsale.org>

Declaration of Peace - Declaration of Peace is a nationwide campaign to establish a concrete and rapid plan for peace in Iraq, including a prompt timetable for withdrawal; a peace process for security, reconstruction and reconciliation; and a shift of federal funding to meet human needs. Signers of the Declaration of Peace Pledge will be asked to contact Congress to urge their support for withdrawal and a peace process and to participate in the Washington, DC Week of Action, September 21st-28th, and local events across the country.

<http://www.declarationofpeace.org>

