

# Win Without War

1320 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW · Fifth Floor · Washington, D.C. 20036

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**CONTACT:** Jessica Smith or Alex Howe,  
Fenton Communications, (202) 822-5200

## **Win Without War: President's Words on Iraq Ring Hollow with a Skeptical American Public**

### **So-Called "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" Is Cliff Note Version of Baseless Claims And a Failed Policy**

#### **U.S. OCCUPATION CONTINUES TO FUEL IRAQI INSURGENCY**

*Statement by Former U.S. Congressman Tom Andrews, National Director of the Win Without War Coalition:*

President Bush sought relief from a growing anti-war movement and an increasingly skeptical public at the U.S. Naval Academy today with the claim that the U.S. is succeeding in Iraq and that the United States has a "strategy for victory". By failing to speak candidly about the reality in Iraq and present a coherent plan for the withdrawal of US military forces, the president's speech will continue the steady erosion of his credibility with the American people and support for his military occupation.

The claims made by the administration in its so-called "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" are demonstrably false including the central claims that "our strategy is working" and that the government is "making steady progress in Iraq". In fact, the Iraqi insurgency is growing in size and sophistication with insurgent attacks increasing from 150 to 700 per week. The average daily death toll of American servicemen and woman have gone from one per day to nearly four per day since the Abu Ghraib prison scandal. The administration is also losing the critical battle for the hearts and minds of Iraqis 82 percent of whom want U.S. military forces out of Iraq and nearly half of whom believe that insurgent attacks on American and coalition forces are justified.

As the saying goes, the first principle to getting out of a hole is to stop digging. In this case, however, it begins with the president being honest with the American people and candidly recognizing that he has our nation and armed forces in a terrible hole.

The president's latest claim of success in Iraq can be added to the mountain of false and baseless claims that the American people have had to endure since the administration began making its case for the U.S. invasion. Today's speech in Annapolis will add to the steady erosion of the president's credibility with the American people 57 percent of whom do not believe that the president is honest.

The truth is that the American public wants the U.S. military out of Iraq and a clear and responsible plan to do it. Such a plan must be based on truth, not baseless claims. The way out of Iraq begins with a candid admission of a failed policy and the distortions that preceded it, the unambiguous announcement that the U.S. will not maintain permanent military bases there, and the immediate initiation of a coherent plan for the withdrawal of

our forces in 2006.

The U.S. military occupation of Iraq is making America less safe by fueling the Iraqi insurgency and international terrorism. It is also weakening the U.S. military. As Lt. Gen. James Helmsley warned a year ago, the Army Reserve “is rapidly degenerating into a broken force.” In an August 3, 2005 article, Lt. Gen. William Odom argues that the war in Iraq has badly hurt the U.S. military services. “The Army, some of the Air Force, the National Guard, and the reserves are now the victims of this gross mismatch between military missions and force structure,” he wrote.

The vast majority of Iraqis and Americans want the U.S. military out of Iraq. They deserve truth, not spin, from an increasingly discredited administration. The national Win Without War coalition is committed to stepping up the pressure in the next several weeks and months to achieve nothing less.

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Win Without War members include: 20/20 Vision, American Friends Service Committee, American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities, Center for International Policy, Citizens for Global Solutions, Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Council for a Livable World, Families USA, Feminist Majority, Fourth Freedom Forum, Global Exchange, Greenpeace, Leadership Conference of Women Religious (LCWR), MoveOn, NAACP, National Council of Churches, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, National Council of Churches, NETWORK A National Social Justice Lobby, Pax Christi USA, Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR), Rainbow/Push Coalition, Shalom Center, Sierra Club, Sojourners, Soulforce, The Tikkun Community, True Majority, Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church General Board of Church and Society, Us Foundation, USAction, Veterans for Peace, Women's Action for New Directions (WAND), Working Assets