

Iraq Strategy document calls for extra 20,000 troops

By [Global Research](#)

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Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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On November 13, The [Iraq Study Group](#) met with President George W. Bush and key members of the Administration including Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley, CIA Director Michael V. Hayden, National Intelligence Director John D. Negroponte, General Peter Pace, General George Casey and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad.

On the 14th, the ISG group “met with key Democratic foreign policy experts, including former National Security Advisor Samuel R. Berger, former Assistant Secretary of State Richard C. Holbrooke and former U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.”

Following these meetings with the ISG, the Bush administration announced that the US would be sending an additional 20,000 troops to the Iraq war theater.

This decision does not point to a major reversal, which could lead to troops withdrawal. On the contrary, it points to military escalation. It would most likely lead into substantive changes in the process of military recruitment.

It also suggests that US troops do not control Iraqi territory outside of the Green Zone.

It reverses Rumsfeld’s idea that you can wage a war with “small, lean and efficient forces”. Rumsfeld’s idea for transforming the military was to develop “high-tech forces”, relying a lesser number of troops.

Michel Chossudovsky, Global Research , 15 November 2006

US plans last big push in Iraq

Strategy document calls for extra 20,000 troops, aid for Iraqi army and regional summit

Simon Tisdall

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[The Guardian](#)



A farewell ceremony for US troops deployed to Iraq. Instead of a troop withdrawal next year, Bush is thinking of increasing the numbers. Photograph: Peter Turnley/Corbis

President George Bush has told senior advisers that the US and its allies must make “a last big push” to win the war in Iraq and that instead of beginning a troop withdrawal next year, he may increase US forces by up to 20,000 soldiers, according to sources familiar with the administration’s internal deliberations.

Mr Bush’s refusal to give ground, coming in the teeth of growing calls in the US and Britain for a radical rethink or a swift exit, is having a decisive impact on the policy review being conducted by the Iraq Study Group chaired by Bush family loyalist James Baker, the sources said.

Although the panel’s work is not complete, its recommendations are expected to be built around a four-point “victory strategy” developed by Pentagon officials advising the group. The strategy, along with other related proposals, is being circulated in draft form and has been discussed in separate closed sessions with Mr Baker and the vice-president Dick Cheney, an Iraq war hawk.

Point one of the strategy calls for an increase rather than a decrease in overall US force levels inside Iraq, possibly by as many as 20,000 soldiers. This figure is far fewer than that called for by the Republican presidential hopeful, John McCain. But by raising troop levels, Mr Bush will draw a line in the sand and defy Democratic pressure for a swift drawdown.

The reinforcements will be used to secure Baghdad, scene of the worst sectarian and insurgent violence, and enable redeployments of US, coalition and Iraqi forces elsewhere in the country.

Point two of the plan stresses the importance of regional cooperation to the successful rehabilitation of Iraq. This could involve the convening of an international conference of neighbouring countries or more direct diplomatic, financial and economic involvement of US allies such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

“The extent to which that [regional cooperation] will include talking to Iran and Syria is still up for debate,” said Patrick Cronin, of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. “Externally, US policy is focused on what is achievable. Some quarters believe Syria in some ways could be helpful. There are more doubts about Iran but Iran holds more cards. Some think it’s worth a try.”

Yesterday, a top state department official, David Satterfield, said America was prepared in

principle to discuss with Iran its activities in Iraq.

Point three focuses on reviving the national reconciliation process between Shia, Sunni and other ethnic and religious parties. According to the sources, creating a credible political framework will be portrayed as crucial in persuading Iraqis and neighbouring countries alike that Iraq can become a fully functional state.

To the certain dismay of US neo-cons, initial post-invasion ideas about imposing fully-fledged western democratic standards will be set aside. And the report is expected to warn that de facto tripartite partition within a loose federal system, as advocated by Democratic senator Joe Biden and others would lead not to peaceful power-sharing but a large-scale humanitarian crisis.

Lastly, the sources said the study group recommendations will include a call for increased resources to be allocated by Congress to support additional troop deployments and fund the training and equipment of expanded Iraqi army and police forces. It will also stress the need to counter corruption, improve local government and curtail the power of religious courts.

"You've got to remember, whatever the Democrats say, it's Bush still calling the shots. He believes it's a matter of political will. That's what [Henry] Kissinger told him. And he's going to stick with it," a former senior administration official said. "He [Bush] is in a state of denial about Iraq. Nobody else is any more. But he is. But he knows he's got less than a year, maybe six months, to make it work. If it fails, I expect the withdrawal process to begin next fall."

The "last push" strategy is also intended to give Mr Bush and the Republicans "political time and space" to recover from their election drubbing and prepare for the 2008 presidential campaign, the official said. "The Iraq Study Group buys time for the president to have one last go. If the Democrats are smart, they'll play along, and I think they will. But forget about bipartisanship. It's all about who's going to be in best shape to win the White House.

The official added: "Bush has said 'no' to withdrawal, so what else do you have? The Baker report will be a set of ideas, more realistic than in the past, that can be used as political tools. What they're going to say is: lower the goals, forget about the democracy crap, put more resources in, do it."

Addressing Congress yesterday, General John Abizaid, the top US commander in the Middle East, warned against setting a timetable for the withdrawal of troops from Iraq, saying it would impede commanders in managing US and Iraqi forces. Gen Abizaid spoke as the Senate armed services committee began re-examining US policy after last week's Democratic election victory. But Gen Abizaid argued against extra troops, saying US divisional commanders believed more pressure needed to be put on the Iraqi army to do its part.

Four-point strategy

- Increase US troop levels by up to 20,000 to secure Baghdad and allow redeployments elsewhere in Iraq
- Focus on regional cooperation with international conference and/or direct diplomatic involvement of countries such as Kuwait and Saudi Arabia

- Revive reconciliation process between Sunni, Shia and others
- Increased resources from Congress to fund training and equipment of Iraqi security forces

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