

Many Americans have not yet conveyed to their elected officials that they must cut all funding for the war and bring the troops home now. They want to know what will happen next. To answer that, and strengthen Congressional resolve to end the war, the peace forces need to introduce a new ethical and spiritual vision of how America could change the way it acts and is perceived in the world. Here's how.

An Ethical Way to End the Iraq War

I. The War is Wrong: Repentance Is Necessary

The remedy for wrong-doing begins with repentance; therefore we propose that the President go before the United Nations and confess that based on reports from intelligence experts, he believed that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. He should explain that this was why he called for an invasion of Iraq. Those reports were wrong and hundreds of thousands of innocent people have been killed and entire cities have been devastated. For the sufferings and deaths that have come from this invasion, he should ask for forgiveness on behalf of himself and the American people who overwhelmingly supported this great wrong.

The scripture declares:

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and forgive their sin, and will heal their land.
(II Chronicles 7:14 KJV)

It is right for a religious president to live out this prescription and declare that it is not a sign of weakness to confess a wrong-doing. We believe that it is only the spiritually strong who are able to do this. We believe that such a confession will go far to restore the stature of America as a truly moral nation. And in repenting on behalf of all Americans, including those who are not religious, the president should acknowledge that this entire society has mistakenly adhered to the view that safety and security can be achieved through domination or control of others, but that a better path to safety and security is to treat others with generosity, care, and genuine concern for their well being.

In the case that the President is unable or unwilling to pursue this path, we urge the Congress to pass a resolution rejecting the strategy of domination and embracing the strategy of generosity, and calling upon the world's peoples to forgive our society for the destructive path it has followed. It should then send representatives to address the United Nations and convey this appeal for forgiveness on behalf of the American people.

II. We should call upon the Arab League to replace the U.S. and British forces with Arab soldiers.

Fellow Arabs know the language, understand the culture, and especially the Religion of the people of Iraq far better than do our own soldiers, who are

usually perceived as modern-day imitators of the Crusaders who once devastated Muslim countries. The U.S. and Britain should withdraw our forces as Arab forces take our place, give our bases to these forces, and require that any US corporation operating in Iraq give at least the majority of its profits to the task of Iraqi reconstruction.

III. Rebuild Iraq and Launch a Global Marshall Plan: Generosity Beats Domination as a Strategy for Homeland Security

True repentance requires the works of repentance. It is not enough to simply say, "We're sorry!" This financial commitment is little compared to the two (2) billion dollars a week the war is presently costing. This plan should be part of a larger Global Marshall Plan which the U.S. announces—to commit at least 1% of the Gross Domestic Product of the U.S. each year for the next twenty years toward the goal of eliminating global (and domestic) poverty, homelessness, inadequate health care, inadequate education, and for repairing the environment. This provides a major step toward a Strategy of Generosity which is the key to rebuilding respect and trust in the United States. It is this kind of generosity which is required by the Scriptures of all the Abrahamic religions and should be pursued not only because it helps increase American security and respect for America around the world, but because it is morally appropriate and religiously mandated.

WE, THE UNDERSIGNED, SUPPORT THE CONCEPT OF REPENTANCE AND GENEROSITY AS CENTRAL TO THE WAY TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ. WE CALL UPON OUR ELECTED OFFICIALS, MEDIA AND FELLOW CITIZENS TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE STRATEGY OUTLINED ABOVE WHICH REQUIRES A FUNDAMENTAL RETHINKING OF WHAT CAN REALLY PROVIDE SECURITY FOR THE U.S. AND THE WORLD.

And signed by:

Rabbi Michael Lerner, Rev. Tony Campolo, Sister Joan Chittister, Donald Gelphi, S.J., Revs. John and Susan Gregory-Davis, Rabbi Stephen B. Jacobs, Howard Zinn, Marshall Berman, and...

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