

March 20, 2007

Ambassador Ronald Spogli
United States Embassy
Via Vittorio Veneto 119/A
00187 Rome, Italy
Fax: (+39) 06.4674.2244

Distinguished Ambassador Spogli,

Today, the United States war in and occupation of Iraq enters its fifth year. In our eighth letter to you, we – US Citizens for Peace and Justice-Rome – are writing to ask you to use your influence on President Bush's administration in order to urge for the immediate and responsible withdrawal of all US military forces and bases from Iraq.

On March 20 2003, a United States led Coalition invaded Iraq. Four years later, the war which then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld assured would last no more than five months, has caused the deaths of more than 650,000 civilians, 8,000 Iraqi Security Forces, and 4,000 coalition members (troops and contractors included). The total cost of the war has been calculated to be over 400 billion dollars (roughly \$195 million per day), a bill that the American people will be paying for decades to come, and in more ways than one. Just in terms of security, for example, a recent study by Mother Jones found that "the rate of fatal terrorist attacks around the world by jihadist groups, and the number of people killed in those attacks, increased dramatically after the invasion of Iraq."

The voices of dissent which marked the beginning of the war have only gotten stronger in the past four years, culminating in mass demonstrations in the past few months. The message from hundreds of thousands of protestors in Washington DC, London, Rome, and around the world is clear:

- US troops should withdraw from Iraq,
- Genuine Iraqi sovereignty should be restored, and
- The United States should pay for the reconstruction of Iraq.

The message, however, has apparently not been heard by the US government, and our previous seven letters to you have also fallen on deaf ears. Today, March 20 2007, US Citizens living in Italy are therefore faxing the Embassy to demand the withdrawal of US troops.

Ambassador Spogli, you have recently used your influence to pressure the Italian government to increase troop levels in Afghanistan, as well as to approve the new US military base in Vicenza. We call on you instead to use your influence to effect a change in US foreign policy, favoring *diplomatic solutions* and cooperation programs over military ones, and **urging an end to the occupation of Iraq.**

Sincerely,

US Citizens for Peace and Justice-Rome