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Post-invasion Iraq / Iraq Study Group's recommendations should be followed

For more information, see the Wikipedia article "[Iraq Study Group Report](#)"

Position: Iraq Study Group's recommendations should be followed

This position addresses the topic [Post-invasion Iraq](#).

For this position

“ Republican Alan K. Simpson, the former US senator from Wyoming, describes the developments as "baby steps" -- small but significant signs that the Bush administration is replacing bluster with diplomacy, just as the study group recommended. ”

From [Bush's baby steps](#), by [Joan Vennochi](#) (*The Boston Globe*, March 4, 2007) ([view](#))

“ The president seems unable to acknowledge that military power alone cannot impose democracy on a violent land unready for it. Miracles can happen. But the turmoil in Iraq today leaves one conclusion: Bush has botched Iraq. He cannot endlessly leave American soldiers to die fighting for impossible objectives. If he cannot admit that, Congress must force him to face reality. ”

From [Getting Out of Iraq](#), by [The Philadelphia Inquirer editorial board](#) (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 15, 2007) ([view](#))

“ Red lines would have to be established against meddling by neighbors in Iraq. Serious U.S. interaction with Iran and Syria would be required. Dreams of regime change would have to be dropped. A special U.S. negotiator would be required - preferably Bush pere's consigliere, James Baker, coauthor of the ISG report. ”

From [It's time for Bush to get an Iraq policy that works](#), by [Trudy Rubin](#) (*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 15, 2007) ([view](#))

“ The reality that has to be confronted is that the disparate armed groups in Iraq will go on committing atrocities against civilians as US troops begin withdrawing, and a residual American force hunkers down in a few well-guarded bases. Should the mayhem reach a certain point, Iraq's neighbors will come under pressure to intervene, if not directly, then by proxy. ”

From [Lesser evils and an exit strategy](#), by [The Boston Globe editorial board](#) (*The Boston Globe*, July 10, 2007) ([view](#))

“ “What a dreadful mistake the president made when he stiff-armed the Iraq Study Group report, which had bipartisan membership, an air of mutual party investment, the imprimatur of what remains of or is understood as the American establishment, and was inherently moderate in its proposals: move diplomatically, adjust the way we pursue the mission, realize abrupt withdrawal would yield chaos.” ”

From [The Two Vacuums](#), by [Peggy Noonan](#) (*The Wall Street Journal*, January 13, 2007) ([view](#))

“ “The report correctly placed resolution of the Iraq war in the context of a larger Middle East whose primary issue is the Arab-Israeli conflict. The group called for a renewed effort by the Bush administration toward the peace process, particularly through a two-state solution for Israel and Palestine.” ”

From [A way out](#), by [Pittsburgh Post-Gazette editorial board](#) (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, December 8, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The document concludes with 79 recommendations, most of which are eminently reasonable and none of which will get us out of Iraq overnight.” ”

From [Bush Listened, but Did He Hear?](#), by [Eugene Robinson](#) (*The Washington Post*, December 8, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The Iraq report is a deeply diplomatic document, stuffed with “coulds” and “mights.” It is, all in all, exactly the kind of shades-of-gray thinking that Mr. Bush despises, and exactly what he needs to get the country out of the hole he has dug.” ”

From [Welcome Political Cover](#), by [The New York Times editorial board](#) (*The New York Times*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The panel's co-chairmen, former Secretary of State James A. Baker III and former U.S. Rep. Lee Hamilton, warned that there are no guarantees of success. But they said any approach is guaranteed to fail if there is no “broad, sustained consensus” from our leaders and the American people. Their report serves as a creditable starting point to build that consensus and put our policy toward Iraq on the right path.” ”

From [Iraq report stresses need for change](#), by [Chicago Sun-Times editorial board](#) (*Chicago Sun-Times*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Broad, sustained consensus hasn't been this nation's strong suit of late. The Iraq Study Group offers a credible agenda that the White House, the Congress and the American people should embrace.” ”

From [Squeezing Iraq](#), by [Chicago Tribune editorial board](#) (*Chicago Tribune*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The path laid out by the Iraq Study Group is one of hard work and aggressive diplomacy, fraught with uncertainty and extending well beyond Iraq's borders. It elevates a “comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace” to the place it belongs as a foundation of regional stability. Most of all, it involves Republicans and Democrats suppressing their cravings for partisan advantage and working together in the nation's interest.” ”

From [Shift the course](#), by [San Francisco Chronicle editorial board](#) (*San Francisco Chronicle*,

December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "Hats off, then, to Baker and his team. This turns out to be a classic work of persuasion. Its target audiences have been well chosen. Its worst-case scenario is plausible. And its recommendations are so carefully phrased that they sound like disengagement while actually signifying better engagement." ”

From [Another way to interpret this report is 'Stay but don't screw up'](#), by [Niall Ferguson](#) (*The Daily Telegraph*, December 10, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "We should hear from Gen. David Petraeus, the top military commander in Iraq, in September and then announce a timetable for shifting the nature of U.S. operations in Iraq, withdrawing combat troops as the surge comes to an end and turning to special operations and support of Iraqi troops. That timetable, in turn, is the lever we now need to bring other regional and international actors to the table to create the regionwide Iraq Support Group envisioned by the Baker-Hamilton report." ”

From [Bipartisanship is good for both sides](#), by [Anne-Marie Slaughter](#) (*Los Angeles Times*, August 9, 2007) ([view](#))

“ "Recent narrow votes in the House and Senate, largely along partisan lines, illustrate our country's continuing division on this critical issue. The best, and perhaps only, way to build national agreement on the path forward is for the president and Congress to embrace the only set of recommendations that has generated bipartisan support: the Iraq Study Group report." ”

From [A Path to Common Ground](#), by [James Baker](#) (*The Washington Post*, April 5, 2007) ([view](#))

Against this position

“ "If the surge is unacceptable, the better option is to cut our losses and withdraw altogether. In fact, the substantive case for either extreme -- surge or outright withdrawal -- is stronger than for any policy between. The surge is a long-shot gamble. But middle-ground options leave us with the worst of both worlds: continuing casualties but even less chance of stability in exchange." ”

From [Iraq: Go Deep or Get Out](#), by [Stephen Biddle](#) (*The Washington Post*, July 11, 2007) ([view](#))

“ "But if Republicans are rushing to desert our troops and spit on the graves of heroes, the Democratic Party at least has been consistent - they've supported our enemies from the start, undercutting our troops and refusing to explain in detail what happens if we flee Iraq. So I'll tell you what happens: massacres. And while I have nothing against Shia militiamen and Sunni insurgents killing each other 24/7, the overwhelming number of victims will be innocent women, children and the elderly." ”

From [The 'Quit Iraq' Caucus](#), by [Ralph Peters](#) (*New York Post*, July 11, 2007) ([view](#))

“ "The surge has succeeded in reducing sectarian killings in Baghdad and civilian casualties overall, but at the cost of increased U.S. casualties and without the Iraqi legislative accomplishments that were established as "political benchmarks." Those benchmarks shouldn't be fetishized. The reason that they were considered so important is that they were thought necessary to entice Sunnis away from the insurgency. Instead, the Sunnis have swung our way anyway, in reaction to al Qaeda brutality and to our strength." ”

From [Abandonment](#), by [Rich Lowry](#) ([National Review](#), July 10, 2007) ([view](#))

“ “We are going to embed more troops and contractors in Iraqi military and police units as America simultaneously withdraws from Iraq? This is a strategy, already proven wrong, that can end only in the collapse of the Iraqi army, numerous American hostages, and a pointless increase in U.S. casualty rates.” ”

From [Back to Your Studies](#), by [Reuel Marc Gerecht](#) ([The Weekly Standard](#), December 9, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “On the ISG report, America's squishy-left media has relentlessly been asking the loaded question, "Will Bush listen?" If Bush cares about winning the War on Terror more generally, he won't.” ”

From [America's Honor](#), by [New York Post editorial board](#) ([New York Post](#), December 8, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Of the many disappointments of the Iraq Study Group's report, none is greater than the failure (or was it unwillingness?) to offer any remotely plausible suggestions for bringing security and stability to significant parts of Iraq. The Baker group instead chose to entertain the fantasy that political reconciliation in Iraq can take place in the absence of basic security for the average Iraqi.” ”

From [It's Up To Bush](#), by [Robert Kagan](#), [William Kristol](#) ([The Weekly Standard](#), December 8, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “But that's what being stupid gets you. It means you don't understand the incredible value of the James Baker Handy-Dandy Solution to All the World's Ills. It's called "Get Israel." Once Israel is gotten, and gotten good, all the problems in the Middle East will be solved.” ”

From [Paris' Peace Plan](#), by [John Podhoretz](#) ([New York Post](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Former Secretary of State James Baker and his panelists are trying to shore up the failing regional system that their generation designed. Released yesterday, their report doesn't offer "a new way forward." Its recommendations echo past failures. And it shows no sense of how gravely the world has changed.” ”

From [Frankly Incensed: Unwise Men Bear Gifts for Butchers](#), by [Ralph Peters](#) ([New York Post](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The fact is, the study group offers 79 recommendations adding up to a cowardly exit from Iraq - and the abandonment of tens of thousands of Iraqis who took America's promises at face value. Also to be tossed overboard are regional allies who believed America has the will to finish the fight it began.” ”

From [The Counsel of Cowards](#), by [New York Post editorial board](#) ([New York Post](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “What reason is there to believe that Iran wants better relations with the United States? Doesn't Iran base its claim to leadership of the Islamic world on the fact that it is taking on, and defeating, the Great Satan? If Iran wanted better relations with the U.S., would it be training and arming Shia militias to kill American soldiers?” ”

From [The ISG Report: Still A Mystery](#), by [John Hinderaker](#) (*Power Line*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Some have labeled the commission's plan of handing off Iraq to the Iraqis a replay of Nixon's Vietnamization. But the similarities go beyond that. In fact, the commission is making the same core mistake that was made in the Vietnam era: treating a war like a political problem to be haggled, spun and bartered.” ”

From [It's a war, not a buffet](#), by [Jonah Goldberg](#) (*Los Angeles Times*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “This is pretty much the same idea that Gen. John Abizaid offered the Senate last month. It is politically palatable because it promises to pull Americans out of combat, does not require any significant increase in the overall American troop presence and puts the burden for success on the Iraqis themselves. But it will almost certainly lead us to disaster.” ”

From [Asking for chaos](#), by [Frederick W. Kagan](#) (*New York Daily News*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Our federal constitution, which the majority of the Iraqi people voted for, is treated flippantly, as though it were a negotiable document rather than the hard-fought result of lengthy negotiation among those willing to participate in the new Iraq. Further, the study group's approach is driven by the concerns of the countries in this region rather than by the concerns of the Iraqi people.” ”

From [For Iraqis, A Promise Is in Peril](#), by [Masrour Barzani](#) (*The Washington Post*, December 20, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Now, there's a diplomatic achievement: undermining our hard-earned agreement with the Europeans to make any future approach to Iran dependent on the suspension of uranium enrichment in order to... demonstrate to the world that a country providing sophisticated weapons, roadside bombs and financial support to both sides of the civil war does not support stability there.” ”

From [In Baker's Blunder, A Chance For Bush](#), by [Charles Krauthammer](#) (*The Washington Post*, December 15, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “To be fair to them, they were only doing what they were asked. And, I suppose, as silly as some of their supposedly grave recommendations were, they were no less silly than some of the near-criminal bêtises for which President Bush and Donald Rumsfeld (who leaves office today, two years too late) have been responsible.” ”

From [Nothing left for lonely Bush except one more push](#), by [Gerard Baker](#) (*The Times*, December 15, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “So one of Washington's closest allies is expected to make dangerous concessions to one of its bitterest enemies on the off chance that this might somehow improve the situation in Iraq? This could only make sense to someone like group co-chairman James A. Baker III, whose approach to the Mideast could be described as "blame Israel first.” ”

From [Throw the Iraq report in the trash](#), by [Max Boot](#) (*Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "The Bush administration overthrew the regime of Saddam Hussein largely as a way of "signaling" that it was no longer prepared to countenance a Middle East of terrorism-sponsoring regimes. Now the ISG announces that not only is the U.S. prepared to deal with those regimes, but that it will do the bidding of one of them, Syria, by again putting maximum pressure on Israel to abandon the Golan Heights." ”

From [Honor Killing](#), by [Bret Stephens](#) (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "The release of the report confirms a Washington establishment desire to avoid conflict and confrontation by "doing a deal." In the 1930s, that model was called appeasement, not realism, and it led to a disaster. Today, we need a Churchill not a Chamberlain policy for the Middle East." ”

From [The Baker-Hamilton Report: A Prescription for Surrender](#), by [Newt Gingrich](#) (*Human Events*, December 11, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "The childlike innocence of the panel members is pervasive in the ISG recommendations, which read like a "wish list" put together by a high-school social studies class learning about the Middle East for the first time, without any regard for history or geopolitical realities." ”

From [Foreign policy ingenues](#), by [The Washington Times editorial board](#) (*The Washington Times*, December 11, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "So there you have it: an Iraq "Support Group" that brings together the Arab League, the European Union, Iran, Russia, China and the U.N. And with support like that who needs lack of support? It worked in Darfur, where the international community reached unanimous agreement on the urgent need to rent a zeppelin to fly over the beleaguered region trailing a big banner emblazoned "YOU'RE SCREWED."" ”

From [ISG must stand for, uh, Inane Guesswork Strategy](#), by [Mark Steyn](#) (*Chicago Sun-Times*, December 10, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "What we need in Iraq is not a New Diplomatic Offensive (capitals in the original) so much as energy and competence in fighting the fight. From the outset of the Iraq war much of our difficulty has stemmed not so much from failures to find the right strategy, as from an astounding and depressing inability to implement the strategic and operational choices we have nominally made." ”

From [No Way to Win a War](#), by [Eliot A. Cohen](#) (*The Wall Street Journal*, December 10, 2006) ([view](#))

Mixed on this position

“ "The members of the Iraq Study Group may not have come up with all the right answers; in their pursuit of unanimity, they may have settled for split-the-difference compromises where only one straight path makes sense. But in their bipartisan spirit of cooperation, they gave Americans a much-needed reminder of how statecraft once was conducted -- and how it ought to be conducted once again." ”

From [Presidential ingratitude](#), by [The Boston Globe editorial board](#) (*The Boston Globe*,

December 9, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The Rumsfeld memo and ISG report are part of a serious effort to forge a bipartisan, sustainable policy that can achieve our national security requirement for an Iraq that can govern, sustain and defend itself. The suggestions Rumsfeld and the ISG have made deserve the careful consideration President Bush has indicated he will give them.” ”

From [Two Cheers, One Boo for Baker-Hamilton](#), by [Human Events editorial board](#) ([Human Events](#), December 8, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “As for specific proposals, the Study Group proves Robert Gates's point from his nomination hearing on Tuesday that "there are no new ideas on Iraq." Its best proposal -- embedding more American troops to train and fight with Iraqi military units -- is well under way at the Pentagon.” ”

From [The Iraq Muddle Group](#), by [The Wall Street Journal editorial board](#) ([The Wall Street Journal](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Their report distills the emerging conventional wisdom in Washington, laced with a measure of wishful thinking. Yes, persuading Iran and Syria to help stabilize Iraq, contrary to the administration's stance, is a worthy pursuit, though it isn't clear why Syria and Iran would want to do so, at least in the immediate term.” ”

From [What they said...](#), by [Los Angeles Times editorial board](#) ([Los Angeles Times](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “What's missing from the study group report, unfortunately, is any evaluation of what should be done if the new strategy doesn't work -- if, despite the stepped-up training, diplomacy and pressure for Iraqi political reconciliation, the incipient civil war intensifies or the army and government remain too weak to survive on their own.” ”

From [The Study Group Reports](#), by [The Washington Post editorial board](#) ([The Washington Post](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “Realistically, Syria would want immunity from the consequences of its assassination campaign in Lebanon, and perhaps renewed suzerainty over that country. Iran would want a tacit acceptance of its nuclear program. If the ISG thinks Iranian and Syrian cooperation in Iraq is worth this price, it should say so. But it doesn't, making its diplomatic recommendations utterly unserious.” ”

From [Half Baked](#), by [National Review editorial board](#) ([National Review](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ “The military component contains a welcome 2008 target date for the beginning of troop withdrawals. But the prospect of mingling U.S. personnel within Iraqi units is chilling. To what extent have those units been infiltrated by insurgents, making embedded Americans ready targets for sabotage and suicide attacks?” ”

From [It's not working'](#), by [Seattle Post-Intelligencer editorial board](#) ([Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#), December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "The President said the report contained "some very good ideas" while suggesting, politely, that it was also stocked with turkeys. He was right on both counts, proving that Gates spoke the truth Tuesday when the incoming defense secretary said, "It's my impression that, frankly, there are no new ideas on Iraq."”

From [What now, Mr. President?](#), by [New York Daily News editorial board](#) (*New York Daily News*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "…; few of the ideas are original, even if some are quite good. Other than a final sequence of detailed administrative and judicial recommendations, too much of the ISG's advice is conventional generalization. That's because all Baker and Hamilton ever intended to give Bush was a diagram for defeat, a device for him to go down without losing face."”

From [Where to From Here?](#), by [Michael Young](#) (*Reason*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "American solutions to Iraqi problems rarely work, and they are almost never sustainable. This is a common mistake made by U.S. officials regarding Iraq—that somehow, we can simply impose our will on the Iraqi government and the Iraqi people because we know best and we have technology and money."”

From [What About the Grunts?](#), by [Phillip Carter](#) (*Slate*, December 7, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "U.S. troops would be redeployed so that they could assist allies and punish enemies, rather than remaining hunkered down in the midst of a civil war, providing easy targets to both sides. The United States would pull back enough to have some freedom of maneuver. But it would remain engaged enough that it could intervene quickly to prevent a bloodbath."”

From [A Realistic Approach To Iraq](#), by [David Ignatius](#) (*The Washington Post*, December 20, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "The study group's recommendations for talking Iran and Syria into bringing peace to Iraq are laughable. President Bush is right to consider the report's recommendations but not rubber stamp them. There are some worthy ideas in the report, but also some stupendously unrealistic ones. President Bush should, with the advice of commanders in the field, cherry pick the report."”

From [The Iraq report: Naive to the core](#), by [New Hampshire Union Leader editorial board](#) (*New Hampshire Union Leader*, December 11, 2006) ([view](#))

“ "Their 79 recommendations turned out to be a mixed bag of good intentions (Hamilton's strength) and profound, manipulative cynicism (a Baker talent) that Bush cannot find congenial."”

From [Meanwhile, Reality In Iraq](#), by [Jim Hoagland](#) (*The Washington Post*, December 10, 2006) ([view](#))