



May 29, 08

Dear Nino, querido compañero,  
Recibí el cuaderno con los mensajes  
de los brigadistas.

I received your letter full of  
solidarity. It gives me great  
encouragement to stay strong  
and optimistic in our struggle  
for justice.

June 14 is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
of Che Guevara's birthday.  
Here I am enclosing a poem and  
a painting that I dedicated to him.

Che's example

Guerrilla fighter of the cause  
I champion, let me tell you:  
all you taught  
later served me well.  
All you taught -  
resolute will,  
impenetrable condor,  
a star well-chosen,  
the value of trustworthiness,  
a look of the greatest assurance,  
hope, valour  
love and joy.

Guerrilla fighter of my dreams  
cherished until fulfilled.  
We continue along the path  
of irreversible victory.

A todo un fuerte abrazo de los 5.  
¡Viva la amistad!

Antonio Guerrero

Today, Che's example is more  
important and necessary than  
ever, because we live in a world  
that every day demands us to  
stand up and fight against so  
much poverty, exploitation, and  
inequality, so much arrogance  
from the rich and so much  
aggression and threats from  
the Empire. Today, Che's  
example is indispensable in  
building the new world that  
we know is possible.

Today, some voices from the  
North are loudly shouting  
to Cuba: ...Changes! With the  
idea to return the life of  
its people to the past capitalist  
regime, but the heroic  
Cuban people have this  
response: Revolution for ever!  
With Fidel, with Raul and with  
the example of Che.

Thank you, once again, for your  
support for Cuba and its  
socialist course.

¡Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

Le envié una carta, un libro a los brigadistas que pusieron su dirección.

*Dear Nino, It is a letter that I sent to many friends in April*

Thank you for your letter and support.

The unjustified U.S invasion and occupation of Iraq has reached its 5 years.

What seems to be a very interesting book has been published, written by Nobel Laureate Joseph Stiglitz and Harvard Economist Linda Bilnes: "The Three Trillion Dollars War: The True Cost of the Iraq Conflict". Perhaps, some of you had the opportunity to listen and read the transcript of Democracy Now on February 29.

President Bush has just said on a TV Show last month that he doesn't agree that the economy is suffering because of this war. "I think- he said - this economy is down because we built too many houses". It is a very "deep" conclusion. I hope he knows that 17,4 million houses stand vacant every year in this country, while 3,5 million people experience a period of homelessness, nearly half of them children. This year another two million homeowners with subprime mortgages- over half of them African American- are expected to lose their homes to repossession. It is a very absurd situation: Homes sitting vacant while children sleep in shelters or in the street.

But **I** do not want to focus my letter on the current housing crisis of the richest country in the world, but in its invasion and occupation of a "third world" country, Iraq, coincidentally and "unfortunately" rich in oil.

A dear friend from England who always send in his letters some "bits and pieces" has just sent me some statistics and comments about this "war" which I want to share with you.



My question is: What is the true cost of the US invasion for the people of Iraq ?.

Will someday, somebody write the truth about this cruel war ?

It's obvious to me that the cost of this ongoing "war" is immeasurable to the people of Iraq.

We hope soon, after November, the war will end, the occupation will finish and the peace will return to Iraq. Perhaps, the United States, which doesn't need to build more houses, will help to build many new houses in the devastated territory of Iraq.

*Antonio Guerrero*

## IRAQ: 5 YEARS ON

### Refugees

Four million-plus displaced Iraqis worldwide, including 2.2 million internally displaced, as of September 2007. Source: UNHCR [www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/text/xml/x/home/odpdoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSTITES&id=470387fc2](http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/text/xml/x/home/odpdoc.pdf?tbl=SUBSTITES&id=470387fc2)

### Cost

The US has spent \$482 billion on the Iraq war, which is \$4,100 for every US household or \$275m per day. Source: National Priorities Project [www.nationalpriorities.org](http://www.nationalpriorities.org)

Spending on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is 35 per cent over and above the US base defence budget. Source: Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation [www.armscontrolcenter.org](http://www.armscontrolcenter.org)

US military expenditure has increased by 46 per cent since the start of the Iraq invasion Source: Global Issues [www.globalissues.org](http://www.globalissues.org)

UK spending on Iraq war: \$6.6 billion Source: Financial Times [www.ft.com/cms/s/0/43cd77a4-53f8-11d2-9a6e-0000779fd2ac.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/43cd77a4-53f8-11d2-9a6e-0000779fd2ac.html)

### Doctors

Iraqi physicians registered before the 2003 invasion: 34,000  
Iraqi physicians who have left Iraq since the 2003 invasion: 17,000  
Iraqi physicians killed since the 2003 invasion: 2,000 Source: Brookings Institute [www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf)

### Opinion

Percentage of Iraqis who oppose the presence of coalition forces, 79 per cent (September 2007) Source: Brookings Institute, November 2007 [www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf)

## IRAQ: 5 YEARS ON

### Deaths

Iraqi death statistics vary greatly:

80,272-87,693 violent deaths of civilians, as of November 2007.

This figure is calculated by crosschecking media reports and studying hospital, morgue, NGO and official figures. The actual number of deaths is likely to be far higher due to gaps in reporting and recording

Source: Iraq Body Count [www.iraqbodycount.org](http://www.iraqbodycount.org)

655,000 'excess deaths' i.e. deaths above what which would be expected in a non-conflict situation

This estimate was calculated by extrapolating data from a survey of 1,849 households conducted in May and July, 2006.

Source: The Lancet, October 2006 <http://www.thelancet.com/webfiles/images/journals/lanet/04406738066892919.pdf>

1,220,580 violent deaths as a result of the conflict. This estimate was calculated by extrapolating data from a survey of 1,499 adults, conducted in August 2007

Source: Opinion Research Business [www.orbion.co.uk](http://www.orbion.co.uk)

Fifty per cent of surveyed Iraqis have experienced/witnessed the murder or kidnapping of a friend or family member since the invasion began

Source: Brookings Institute, November 2007

[www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/saban/~/media/Files/Centers/Saban/Iraq%20Index/index20071129.pdf)

Coalition soldier deaths: 4,211, including 3,904 US soldiers and 174 British soldiers

Contractor deaths: 1,001

Source: Iraq Coalition Casualty Count [www.icasualties.org](http://www.icasualties.org)

### Surely some mistake

Chris Abbott ('How to Withdraw from Iraq', *Special Feature, NI 407*) calls for 'an apology from key Coalition governments for the mistakes that have been made'. Mistakes? So sanctions that are estimated to have killed half a million children, shock and awe bombing, invasion of a sovereign country, the deaths of another one million people, the destruction of entire cities, the poisoning of the countryside with DU dust, the destruction of what was once the best medical system in the region, torture and rendition, millions of refugees both external and internal – these are just mistakes? Not war crimes?

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