

Pax Christi urges ‘complete reversal’ of U.S. Iraq policy

WASHINGTON - Pax Christi USA has been gathering signatures for an advertisement that will call for “a complete reversal of U.S. policy” in Iraq, including a withdrawal of U.S. troops.

“The U.S. is not the honest broker who can craft peace among the Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds. Our continued military presence is counterproductive,” says the ad, which Pax Christi plans to run in the March 16 issue of the National Catholic Reporter.

“Four years after launching an illegal and immoral war, it is time to bring the U.S. occupation of Iraq to an end,” the ad says.

Pax Christi USA is the U.S. branch of an international Catholic peace movement committed to nonviolence as a means of conflict resolution. “For all who would believe that violence can serve any productive purpose, the tragic experience in Iraq should be ample evidence to the contrary,” the ad says.

While calling for withdrawal of U.S. troops, the ad also says, “This nation must take economic responsibility for the destruction and chaos that has been unleashed. Nothing short of a modern-day Marshall Plan is needed to rebuild infrastructure and create jobs.” Under the Marshall Plan, massive U.S. aid helped Western Europe rebuild from the destruction of World War II.

The ad also calls on President George W. Bush and Congress to assure funding of “full benefits, adequate health care and ongoing support for all returning U.S. service personnel.

It asks the government to “commence authentic efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and seek a regional solution to the ongoing plight of refugees in the greater Middle East.”

Johnny Zokovitch, Pax Christi’s communications director, said the signature

campaign began in early January. It was to end Feb. 15.