



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Senate Makes Its Voice Clear on New Course in Iraq War

WASHINGTON, D.C.... U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, on Tuesday hailed a Senate vote that would provide a new direction for the U.S. military in Iraq. Byrd, author of the Senate's supplemental funding legislation, fought for a provision of that bill that would require the President to begin to redeploy American forces from Iraq.

Senator Byrd issued the following statement after the Senate's vote:

"Today, the Senate sent a loud message that we will no longer continue to blindly support the President's war in Iraq. Supporting the troops means doing all we can to remove them from this violent internal sectarian conflict. Keeping more than 140,000 troops in Iraq will only act as a catalyst for expanded violence in Iraq and across the region. The Senate has placed us on course to remove our brave troops from this volatile situation and pursue a diplomatic track which may pave the way to a national reconciliation for the people of Iraq. We hope the President will stand with us and the American people."

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BACKGROUND:

The Senate legislation directs President Bush to begin to redeploy U.S. forces from Iraq, with a goal of having only a limited number of troops remaining in the country on March 31, 2008. A small number of American forces would remain in Iraq for force protection, training and equipping Iraqi troops, and targeted counterterrorism options. The legislation would allow the U.S. military to focus its resources on Osama bin Laden, his organization that attacked us on 9/11, and destroying his base of operations in Afghanistan. Importantly, the legislation includes a series of benchmarks for the Iraqis to meet and also the inclusion of regular progress reports to Congress from the U.S. commander in Iraq.