



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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Chairman Byrd Responds to President on Iraq Supplemental

Washington, DC... U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, made the following statement in response to President Bush's speech today, in which he threatened to veto any war supplemental legislation that does not grant him a blank check to continue his failed policy in Iraq.

"It is disappointing, but hardly surprising, that the President is determined to stick to his 'my way or the highway' approach on Iraq through the final months of his presidency. Like a broken record, the President is once again insisting that Congress should have no say in the funding of the Iraq War."

"The President has declared that he will veto any funding that is over his request. He has made it clear where his priorities lie. To date, the President has requested and Congress has approved \$45 billion to invest in infrastructure in Iraq. At a time when the Iraqi government is running multi-billion dollar surpluses from excess oil revenues, the President is asking the American taxpayer to contribute another \$3 billion to reconstruct Iraq. Yet, the President has not requested one dime for critical priorities here at home such as roads, bridges, schools, and flood prevention. Nor has he requested additional funds to help the victims of Katrina recover from that disastrous storm. The President is once again asserting that investing in America's needs is somehow 'wasteful' spending, whereas pouring countless billions into Iraq constitutes a wise investment. He is flat wrong."

"The United States Constitution vests Congress with the power of the purse, not the President. This Congress will not simply sign on the dotted line for this President's failed policy in Iraq. Far too much is at stake for our nation, and for the world."

"I am heartened that the President has finally responded to the men and women in uniform and Democrats in Congress who urged him to relieve the heavy

burden that prolonged deployments have placed the backs of our troops and their families. However, the President remains committed to an indefinite presence of over 140,000 American troops in Iraq, with no plan in place to end the war and bring them home. That is unacceptable to me, and it is unacceptable to the American people.”

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