



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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Senate Appropriations Prepares to Tackle War Funding Bill

WASHINGTON, D.C.... The Senate Appropriations Committee will begin its work later this month on the President's request for \$99.6 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with a special hearing with the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State.

"We will take a hard look at the funding request, and make sure that the dollars are justified and can be spent wisely," Committee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., said in announcing the hearing. "We will put the best interests of our troops and the American people at the forefront as we craft this legislation. We will not be a rubberstamp for this White House or a profit windfall for government contractors."

The February 27, 2007, hearing will feature testimony from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates. The hearing will begin at 2:30 p.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Already, the Congress has appropriated more than \$376 billion for the war in Iraq, with another \$98 billion directed to the war in Afghanistan.

"The American people want a new strategy in Iraq. But I fear that this war funding request cements a policy of more of the same -- more hunkering down, more forcing our troops to stay pinned in the middle of a civil war," Byrd said. "We must look to this funding request for the proof that the President is serious when he says he intends to shift the burden of this civil war in Iraq off the shoulders of American troops and into the hands of the sovereign government of Iraq."

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