



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

PRESS RELEASE

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Byrd Statement on Funding for Nation's Troops

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, issued the following statement in response to President Bush's false assertion today that Congress is withholding funding from our troops.

The President is again misleading the American people by falsely claiming that Congress is delaying funds for our troops. This is simply untrue. Congress has already provided \$70 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan this year, and the emergency supplemental legislation adds nearly \$100 billion more for our troops. In fact, this Congress is acting on a more rapid timetable than the previous Republican-controlled 109th Congress.

The time has come for a strategy that will spur the Iraqi government to take greater responsibility for the future of the Iraqi nation. The political posturing by this White House must end. Our legislation demands accountability by establishing benchmarks for the Iraqi leadership to achieve. As the commanding officer in the region has said, the war in Iraq cannot be resolved by the American military. We must adopt a new strategy that will compel Iraqis to take ownership for the future of their country.

The American people want an end to the President's misguided and open-ended strategy in Iraq that leaves our troops caught in the crossfire of a brutal civil war. I urge the President to work with Congress on a responsible plan to end the war, bring our troops out of Iraq, and refocus on Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network that attacked us on September 11.

We will complete work on this legislation quickly and send it to the President before the end of the month. It will be a responsible plan that provides key resources for our troops, takes care of our veterans, and rebuilds communities laid to waste by Hurricane Katrina. If the President chooses to work with Congress, we can reach a bipartisan solution that unites the country rather than divides it, while meeting the expectations and needs of the American people.

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