

Davis co-signs letter calling for full funding for safe withdrawal of troops from Iraq

Fully fund the safe withdrawal of our troops from Iraq

Dear Colleague,

We write to share our thoughts with you about Congressional action regarding the ongoing occupation of Iraq and to make the case for fully funding the safe withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq over a clear timeline.

By framing their discussion of the war in terms of winning and losing, the Bush administration seeks to portray critics of their policies as opposed to victory, or supportive of defeat.

The fact is that you cannot "win" an occupation, just as there is no way for the United States to "win" an Iraqi civil war.

The Bush administration understands this, just as they understand that there are no pretty or clean options for bringing a responsible end to our policy there. They are content to mouth the words of victory while they try to run out the clock, playing a cynical game of political "chicken," where whoever acts to bring a responsible end to their failed policy will be accused of having lost Iraq.

There is no question that moving to stop this folly carries a political risk - the accusation that Democrats gave up on the Vietnam War, despite all evidence that it was an unwinnable conflict, hurt the party's credibility on national security issues for a generation.

But we must consider the very real cost of not acting. We are spending \$8 billion a month occupying Iraq, with an average of 67 U.S. troops being killed and 500 being wounded. The cost to our security of having our military bogged down in Iraq indefinitely is unsustainable, and is not only sapping vital funds from efforts to fight global terrorism, but is strengthening jihadist recruitment efforts internationally. The longer we allow the administration to delay meaningful movement, and the longer we fail to extract ourselves from this quagmire, the more dangerous this failed foreign policy becomes to America and the rest of the world.

As General Odom, the former head of the NSA under President Reagan,

has made clear, withdrawal of U.S. troops is a precondition for engaging other countries in the region on their vested interest in Iraq's future stability. In terms of policy, fully funding the safe withdrawal of U.S. troops makes strategic sense.

Congress is going to have to act decisively to end this occupation and to bring troops home. Bush has bet his legacy on an unnecessary war that his administration has botched at every turn. His escalation plan is a plan to pass the buck. If anyone thinks that it will be easy for the next President, even a Democrat, to quickly extricate our nation from the mess Bush has made, he or she is just wrong. Congress is going to have to act, either sooner or later.

The Bush administration argues that Congressional action on Iraq either constitutes micromanagement or cutting off funding for troops in the field, but let's look at the facts.

Fully funding withdrawal is not micromanagement, it is macromanagement - the Bush administration has so badly managed this effort that they have forced Congress to intervene.

Fully funding withdrawal is not cutting off funding - we are going to fully fund a rational alternative to the administration's attempt to run out the clock on their failed policy.

There is ample precedent of both Republican and Democratic Congresses acting to restrict or direct funds during wartime and the time has come to consider such action again.

We have a responsibility to challenge the administration's efforts to run out the clock, and by proposing to intervene by fully funding a policy that actually fulfills our nation's long term strategic security objectives, we force them to defend their track record on the war, which is a debate that Democrats win every time.

We hope to work with you to develop strategies to fully fund the safe withdrawal of our troops from Iraq.

Sincerely,