

PENTAGON REPORT SHOWS CLEAR NEED FOR NEW DIRECTION IN IRAQ

On Wednesday, the Pentagon submitted their quarterly report to Congress assessing progress in Iraq. The findings clearly show the need for a new direction in Iraq, which House Democrats are providing in the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act.

DOD: IRAQ HAS ELEMENTS OF CIVIL WAR

“Some elements of the situation in Iraq are properly descriptive of a 'civil war'...”

[Pentagon Quarterly Report, Washington Post, 3/15/07]

The Pentagon's Quarterly Report echoed what the National Intelligence Estimate said in January: Iraq is in a civil war. Taken with statements by General Petraeus and other military leaders that there is only a political, not a military solution, it is clear that only Iraqis can bring an end to the war.

IRAQIS “TAKING BACK SEAT IN COMBAT OPERATIONS”

“Iraqi forces began taking a back seat in combat operations in Iraq last autumn, even before President Bush started deploying 21,500 more troops.” [LA Times, 3/15/07]

In his weekly radio address on January 13, President Bush claimed that his plan for escalating the Iraq war “puts Iraqis in the lead” in reducing violence and sectarian fighting. According to the Pentagon report, this could not be farther from the truth: in October, US forces conducted 8% of operations, while 72% were joint operations; in January, US forces conducted 33% of operations, and only 59% were joint operations. [LA Times, 3/15/07]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION PUSHING BACK BENCHMARK DEADLINES

“Efforts by the Iraqi government at political reconciliation...had produced ‘little progress’ in late 2006 with ‘no effect on quelling violence,’ the report said.” [Washington Post, 3/15/07]

Six months ago, the Bush Administration put forth a set of political goals that were to be met by the Iraqi government this month. Now, however, the Administration is saying that these goals “will take significantly longer to achieve.” They now predict that the goals will not be met until the end of this year, but there is no guarantee that they will be met even by then. [NY Times, 3/15/07]

IRAQIS NOT MAKING PROGRESS, BUSH HAS NO ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

“A Pentagon assessment of progress in Iraq...notes that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki ‘has promised to reform his government, beginning with his cabinet and the ministries,’ but that none of those steps had yet happened.” [NY Times, 3/15/07]

In his January 10 address to the nation, President Bush outlined security, political, and economic benchmarks that need to be met by the Iraqi government but he failed to include any means for holding it accountable. The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health, and Iraq Accountability Act offered by the House Democrats will finally hold the Iraqi government accountable for meeting these benchmarks.

Prepared by the Office of Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, 3/15/07