

Members Demand Iraq Debate Reflect Unity -- September 4, 2007

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Michael N. Castle (R-DE) and Congressman John Tanner (D-TN) led a bipartisan group of eleven Members of Congress in calling on Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner to set aside partisan differences and come together in support of a responsible post-surge strategy in Iraq. The group emphasized that agreeing to a bipartisan approach to the Iraq conflict is crucial as Congress prepares for debate in September.

The September 4th letter was signed by a broad coalition of House Members, including: Reps. Michael N. Castle (R-DE), John Tanner (D-TN), Phil English (R-PA), Scott Garrett (R-NJ), Tim Mahoney (D-FL), Jim Gerlach (R-PA), Allen Boyd (D-FL), Charles W. Dent (R-PA), Robert A. Brady (D-PA), Thomas E. Petri (R-WI), and Dennis A. Cardoza (D-CA).

"While I am hopeful that General Petraeus' report next week will show progress, we shouldn't wait to begin discussing a post-surge strategy to start turning more of the day-to-day responsibilities over to the Iraqis. Our group is dedicated to a bipartisan approach reflecting shared goals to unite, rather than divide us, said Rep. Mike Castle (R-DE)."

"Our military has performed magnificently in every task that has been asked of them," said Tanner, a veteran of the U.S. Navy and Tennessee National Guard, and the chairman of the U.S. delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. "General David Petraeus has said that a 'political aspect' is vital to achieving full victory in Iraq, but President Bush and the war's civilian leaders have not shown a clear strategy for resolving the political strife and inaction that are crippling Iraq's ability to take control of its own country. Members of both parties must work together on this critical issue."

Text of
letter:

September 4, 2007

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Honorable John A. Boehner

The

Speaker
Leader

Minority

House of Representatives
of Representatives

House

Washington, D.C. 20515
D.C. 20515

Washington,

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

We ask that you, our leaders, work together to put an end to the political in-fighting over the war in Iraq and allow the House to unite behind a bipartisan strategy to stabilize the country and bring our troops home.

Since 2003, over 3,700 American military personnel have been killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom and more than 25,000 have been injured. We have also spent over \$400 billion in the course of this conflict. It is clear that the American people want a straightforward plan regarding our involvement and long-term interests in the region.

Next week, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker will submit a very important report to Congress regarding efforts to quell violence and reach political compromise in Iraq. While we are hopeful that their report will show progress, we should not wait any longer to come together in support of a responsible post-surge strategy to safely bring our troops home to their families.

It is absolutely crucial that we stabilize Iraq and transition the combat mission to the Iraqis. Any future legislative proposals considered in the House must reflect a bipartisan approach to this conflict. We ask that you join us in committing to a truly bipartisan dialogue on this issue immediately.

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