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S. CON. RES. 4

Expressing the sense of Congress on Iraq.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 24, 2007

Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. NELSON of Nebraska, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COLEMAN, Mr. SALAZAR, Mr. BAYH, Mr. SMITH, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. NELSON of Florida, and Mrs. MCCASKILL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress on Iraq.

Whereas we respect the constitutional authorities given a President in article II, section 2, which states that “The President shall be commander in chief of the Army and Navy of the United States;” it is not the intent of this resolution to question or contravene such authority, but to accept the offer to Congress made by the President on January 10, 2007, that, “if members have improvements that can be made, we will make them. If circumstances change, we will adjust”;

Whereas the United States strategy and operations in Iraq can only be sustained and achieved with support from the American people and with a level of bipartisanship;

Whereas over 137,000 American military personnel are currently serving in Iraq, like thousands of others since March 2003, with the bravery and professionalism consistent with the finest traditions of the United States armed forces, and are deserving of the support of all Americans, which they have strongly;

Whereas many American service personnel have lost their lives, and many more have been wounded, in Iraq, and the American people will always honor their sacrifices and honor their families;

Whereas the U.S. Army and Marine Corps, including their Reserve and National Guard organizations, together with components of the other branches of the military, are under enormous strain from multiple, extended deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan;

Whereas these deployments, and those that will follow, will have lasting impacts on the future recruiting, retention and readiness of our Nation's all volunteer force;

Whereas in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006, the Congress stated that "calendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full sovereignty, with Iraqi security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and sovereign Iraq";

Whereas United Nations Security Council Resolution 1723, approved November 28, 2006, "determin[ed] that the situation in Iraq continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security";

Whereas a failed state in Iraq would present a threat to regional and world peace, and the long-term security interests of the United States are best served by an Iraq that

can sustain, govern, and defend itself, and serve as an ally in the war against extremists;

Whereas Iraq is experiencing a deteriorating and ever-widening problem of sectarian and intra-sectarian violence based upon political distrust and cultural differences between some Sunni and Shia Muslims;

Whereas Iraqis must reach political settlements in order to achieve reconciliation, and the failure of the Iraqis to reach such settlements to support a truly unified government greatly contributes to the increasing violence in Iraq;

Whereas the responsibility for Iraq's internal security and halting sectarian violence must rest primarily with the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces;

Whereas U.S. Central Command Commander General John Abizaid testified to Congress on November 15, 2006, "I met with every divisional commander, General Casey, the Corps Commander, [and] General Dempsey. We all talked together. And I said, in your professional opinion, if we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? And they all said no. And the reason is, because we want the Iraqis to do more. It's easy for the Iraqis to rely upon us to do this work. I believe that more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more responsibility for their own future";

Whereas Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki stated on November 27, 2006, that "The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and blood-letting of innocents are the politicians";

Whereas there is growing evidence that Iraqi public sentiment opposes the continued U.S. troop presence in Iraq, much less increasing the troop level;

Whereas, in the fall of 2006, leaders in the Administration and Congress, as well as recognized experts in the private sector, began to express concern that the situation in Iraq was deteriorating and required a change in strategy; and, as a consequence, the Administration began an intensive, comprehensive review of the Iraq strategy, by all components of the Executive branch;

Whereas, in December 2006, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group issued a valuable report, suggesting a comprehensive strategy that includes “new and enhanced diplomatic and political efforts in Iraq and the region, and a change in the primary mission of U.S. forces in Iraq that will enable the United States to begin to move its combat forces out of Iraq responsibly”;

Whereas, on January 10, 2007, following consultations with the Iraqi Prime Minister, the President announced a new strategy (hereinafter referred to as the “plan”), the central element of which is an augmentation of the present U.S. military force structure through additional deployments of approximately 21,500 U.S. military troops to Iraq;

Whereas this proposed level of troop augmentation far exceeds the expectations of many of us as to the reinforcements that would be necessary to implement the various options for a new strategy, and led many members to express outright opposition to augmenting our troops by 21,500;

Whereas the Government of Iraq has promised repeatedly to assume a greater share of security responsibilities, disband militias, consider constitutional amendments and enact laws to reconcile sectarian differences, and improve the quality of essential services for the Iraqi people; yet, despite those promises, little has been achieved;

Whereas the President said on January 10, 2007, that “I’ve made it clear to the Prime Minister and Iraq’s other leaders that America’s commitment is not open-ended” so as to dispel the contrary impression that exists; and

Whereas the recommendations in this resolution should not be interpreted as precipitating any immediate reduction in, or withdrawal of, the present level of forces: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) the Senate disagrees with the “plan” to
4 augment our forces by 21,500, and urges the Presi-
5 dent instead to consider all options and alternatives
6 for achieving the strategic goals set forth below with
7 reduced force levels than proposed;

8 (2) the primary objective of the overall U.S.
9 strategy in Iraq should be to encourage Iraqi leaders
10 to make political compromises that will foster rec-
11 onciliation and strengthen the unity government, ul-
12 timately leading to improvements in the security sit-
13 uation;

1 (3) the military part of this strategy should
2 focus on maintaining the territorial integrity of Iraq,
3 denying international terrorists a safe haven, con-
4 ducting counterterrorism operations, promoting re-
5 gional stability, and training and equipping Iraqi
6 forces to take full responsibility for their own secu-
7 rity;

8 (4) United States military operations should, as
9 much as possible, be confined to these goals, and
10 should charge the Iraqi military with the primary
11 mission of combating sectarian violence;

12 (5) the military Rules of Engagement for this
13 plan should reflect this delineation of responsibil-
14 ities;

15 (6) the United States Government should trans-
16 fer to the Iraqi military, in an expeditious manner,
17 such equipment as is necessary;

18 (7) the Senate believes the United States should
19 continue vigorous operations in Anbar province, spe-
20 cifically for the purpose of combating an insurgency,
21 including elements associated with the Al Qaeda
22 movement, and denying terrorists a safe haven;

23 (8) the United States Government should en-
24 gage selected nations in the Middle East to develop

1 a regional, internationally sponsored peace-and-rec-
2 onciliation process for Iraq;

3 (9) the Administration should provide regular
4 updates to the Congress, produced by the Com-
5 mander of United States Central Command and his
6 subordinate commanders, about the progress or lack
7 of progress the Iraqis are making toward this end;
8 and

9 (10) our overall military, diplomatic and eco-
10 nomic strategy should not be regarded as an “open-
11 ended” or unconditional commitment, but rather as
12 a new strategy that hereafter should be conditioned
13 upon the Iraqi government’s meeting benchmarks
14 that must be specified by the Administration.

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