



TALKING POINTS on the President's Address on Iraq

OUR PRINCIPLE: The rise of a self-sustaining Iraqi democracy is crucial to our success in the Global War on Terror. Success is our only option in Iraq.

The President is our Commander in Chief – it is important that the Congress hear him out without prejudice, analyze what he says, and then exercise its constitutional responsibility for oversight.

Success is the only option in Iraq. Republicans and Democrats must work together to achieve success in Iraq. The consequences of failure are too great.

Iraq has a plan in place to enforce the rule of law equally, achieve security and bring stability to the country. The President's speech tonight is as much a statement of our commitment to success in Iraq as it is a report on Iraq's plan for achieving stability. The speech will detail Iraq's plan, enumerate steps Iraqis have taken to achieve stability, and outline our commitment to supporting Iraq achieve its objectives.

The deployment of additional troops is to support Iraq's new plan for stability. Iraq's leaders have made the case to the White House that they have stepped up their commitment to achieving stability in their own country, and they have asked the U.S. for support in implementing their plan. We will give Iraq the tools and support it requires to implement its plan for achieving stability.

Our commitment in Iraq is not open-ended. To the extent the U.S. has offered support to Iraq, we are doing so because they have made a compelling case that they are stepping-up their commitment to equal application of the rule of law and achieving lasting security.

Iraq will carry a greater share of responsibility. Additional troops will play a supporting role in helping Iraq realize its plan for stability. Iraqis will be kicking down doors. Iraqis will be arresting insurgents. Iraqis will be locking them up and ensuring they are kept off streets. Americans expect to see a demonstrable stepped-up level of Iraqi involvement and ownership.

Republicans are committed to ensuring that our troops are fully funded. Republicans will resist any Democrat plan to cut off funding for troops in Iraq.

Congress must ensure that our servicemen and women have the tools they need to complete the job they have been given.

Republicans will not ask our troops to fight with one hand tied behind their back. Republicans will not allow our troops to be in harm's way without established rules of engagement that allows them to defend themselves and their fellow servicemen and women.

It is unfortunate that Democrats have chosen to prejudge the President's plan – politics should stop at the water's edge. Democrats and Republicans have a moral responsibility to put partisan differences aside and engage in an honest discussion about the way forward in Iraq. The President's proposals deserve constructive review and debate, not rancor and blatant partisanship.

Democrat leaders continue to be divided on Iraq. Not only have Democrats not offered a plan for success in Iraq, they continue to be divided on the issue. According to media reports, Democrats intend to hold hearings and have a vote on the President's plan.

- The Speaker believes that there should be a congressional vote to authorize additional troop deployments (*AP, 1/9/07*). On the other hand, Majority Leader Hoyer believes the Constitution "probably" gives the President the authority as Commander-in-Chief to deploy troops as necessary (*NBC First Read, 1/9/07*). This reflects a longstanding division between the top two House Democrats on the war in Iraq.