

THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM

House passes measure, slams Bush's Iraq policy



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., answers questions during a news conference Friday on Capitol Hill in Washington after a vote on a non-binding resolution on the war in Iraq. The vote on the measure was 246-182, a symbolic rejection of President Bush's decision to send more than 20,000 additional U.S. troops to Iraq.

Democrats send symbolic message by opposing troop 'surge'

By DAVID ESPO
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON
The Democratic-controlled House issued a symbolic rejection of President Bush's decision to deploy more troops to Iraq on Friday, opening an epic confrontation between Congress and commander in chief over an unpopular war that has taken the lives of more than 3,100 U.S. troops.



BUSH

The vote on the non-binding measure was 246-182, and within minutes, Democrats said their next move would be to challenge Bush's request for \$93 billion in new funds for the Pentagon. "The stakes in Iraq are too high to recycle proposals that have little prospect for success," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi, leader of Democrats who gained power last fall in elections framed by public opposition to the war. "The passage of this legislation will signal a change in direction in Iraq that will end the fighting and bring our

"The passage of this legislation will signal a change in direction in Iraq that will end the fighting and bring our troops home."

Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House

troops home," she vowed after the vote, in which 17 Republicans joined 229 Democrats in a wartime rebuke to the president.

Citing recent comments by Democrats, Bush's Republican allies said repeatedly the measure would lead to attempts to cut off funds for the troops. Outnumbered, they turned to GOP Rep. Sam Johnson of Texas to close their case, and the former Vietnam prisoner of war stepped to the microphone as lawmakers in both parties rose to applaud his heroism. "Now it's time to stand up for my friends who did not make it home, and for those who fought and died in Iraq already," he said. "We must not cut funding for our troops. We must stick by them," he added, snapping off a

salute as he completed his remarks to yet another ovation.

Bush made no comment on the developments, and his spokesman said the president was too busy to watch the proceedings on television.

After a secure videoconference with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Bush said the Iraqis reported providing troops to fight alongside Americans, making sure that no ethnic or religious factions are ignored in the security operations, providing \$10 billion toward reconstruction and working on an oil revenue-sharing law.

"That's good news for the Iraqi people. And it should give people here in the United States confidence that his government knows its responsibilities and is following through on those responsibilities," Bush said.

More than 390 of 434 lawmakers spoke during nearly 45 hours of dignified debate that spilled across four days, an unusual amount of time devoted to what Republicans and Democrats alike said was the most significant issue confronting the country.

House Republican Leader John Boehner appeared to choke back tears at one point as he read from a letter

that a husband of a former congressional aide wrote home before being killed in Fallujah. Pelosi led the House in a moment of silence, out of respect, she said, for those who fought, and "particularly those who have lost their lives in the war, and their families."

Two Democrats joined 180 Republicans in opposition. Moving quickly, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., set a test vote for today on an identical measure, and several presidential contenders in both parties rearranged their weekend campaign schedules to be present.

Republican senators said in advance they would deny Democrats the 60 votes needed to advance the resolution, adding they would insist on equal treatment for a GOP-drafted alternative that opposes any reduction in funds for the troops. Even so, there were signs of Republican restlessness on the issue. Only two members of the GOP rank and file sided with Democrats on an earlier procedural vote; the total figured to be higher this time.

Bush has already said passage of the measure will not deter him from proceeding with the deployment of another 21,500 troops.

Poll: Bush gains support for Iraq troop increase, though most still oppose plan

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON
President Bush faces widespread opposition to the troop buildup in Iraq, though he has gained support over the past month, an AP-Ipsos poll found this week.

The president has nudged support for the troop increase to 35 percent from 26 percent in early January. Sixty-three percent of those surveyed still oppose the increase.

The increased support came from some of Bush's core supporters, Republicans, men, whites, suburbanites and people with higher incomes.

House Democrats, responding to the public's unhappiness with the war, pushed a nonbinding resolution that criticized Bush for the planned buildup.

The resolution passed Friday. A majority of people said the war was a hopeless cause and they did not think more troops would stabilize Iraq, according to the AP-Ipsos

poll released Friday.

Bush said this week that members of the House "have every right to express their opinion" on the resolution. But he indicated he would fight hard for the money needed to cover the costs of the additional troops.

Two-thirds of those questioned oppose cutting money for the troops and 60 percent are against cutting money intended just for the additional troops. Nearly half of Democrats oppose cutting money for the additional troops and almost two-thirds of those who know someone who has served in Iraq oppose that idea.

Democrats are considering how to pressure Bush to scale back military efforts in Iraq. They are wary of the political risks of cutting money, which could invite charges that they do not support the troops.

The poll of 1,002 adults was taken Monday through Thursday and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

AP-IPSOS POLL

Bush gains support

While the majority of Americans oppose sending more troops to Iraq, support for President Bush's plan has grown in the past month, an AP-Ipsos poll found.

Would you favor or oppose ...

Favor Oppose

... sending more troops to Iraq?

Feb. 12-15, 2007

35% 63

Jan. 16-18

31 67

Jan. 8-10

26 70

... Congress cutting all funding for the Iraq war?

29% 68

... Congress cutting funding for the additional troops President Bush wants to send to Iraq?

38% 60

NOTE: Poll of 1,002 adults taken Feb. 12-15, 2007; margin of error ± 3.1 percentage points; "not sure" was omitted

Iraqis see hope in Baghdad security sweep; U.S. guarded

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq

As a military offensive seeks to bring Baghdad from the brink of anarchy, a top Iraqi security officer tried Friday to measure its early stages using the grim logic of a place with daily bloodshed: by counting the bodies arriving at the morgue.

Ten corpses were collected off the streets, apparently all victims of the city's lawless jumble of gang justice and sectarian payback. The daily body tally recently has often been 40 or more, excluding major bombings, said Brig. Gen. Qassim Moussawi.

This was the basis for an upbeat message by Moussawi, a spokesman for the joint U.S.-Iraqi security sweep that began this week and has so far faced limited resistance. But his American counterparts remain much more guarded.

"I would say that it is way too early to establish any trends," said Lt. Col. Chris Garver, a U.S. military spokesman. "We've just started to focus our operations."

The Iraqis are eager to show clear progress to boost the leadership of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and returned after American forces left.



This image released on the Internet by al-Qaida on Friday shows deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri ridiculing Americans. He says on the video that President Bush's claim to have deprived al-Qaida of a safe haven in Afghanistan is a "bare-faced lie."

Al-Qaida video takes jab at U.S.

By JASPER MORTIMER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAIRO, Egypt

Al-Qaida posted a video Friday showing what it claimed to be an insurgent attack on U.S. and Afghan forces in Afghanistan, in an apparent attempt to disparage American claims of winning the war against the Taliban.

The video argues that the Afghan people support the insurgents and assist their attacks on U.S.-Afghan forces.

The 24-minute video carries the logo of the al-Qaida media company, as-Sahab, and was posted on an Islamic Web site known for hosting extremist material.

It was titled "Holocaust of the Americans in the land of Khorasan, the Islamic emirate: Capture of an American post, Arghandab." Khorasan refers to Afghanistan.

The tape begins with the deputy leader of al-Qaida, Ayman al-Zawahiri, ridiculing President Bush's claim to have deprived al-Qaida of a safe haven in Afghanistan as a "bare-faced lie."

With a narrator speaking in English, the tape shows video film of a purported attack on a military position in Arghandab, a district 100 miles northeast of the city of Kandahar. The narrator, who sounds like the American al-Qaida member Adam Gadahn, claims that the position is "liberated" by the insurgents.

The film does not show the insurgents capturing the target. The authenticity of the scenes shown could not be verified.

British coroner: 'Friendly fire' images won't be shown in court

The Associated Press

OXFORD, England

A coroner reluctantly agreed Friday to a U.S. government request not to show in open court a cockpit video capturing an exchange between two American pilots in Iraq after they fired on British troops, killing one.

Oxfordshire Assistant Deputy Coroner Andrew Walker said, however, that he would publish a transcript of the video as evidence in the civilian inquest into Lance Cpl. Matty Hull's death.

"If it were not for the family, I would not be willing to be bound by an agreement between the U.S. and the U.K. on the use of evidence I consider crucial," Walker said.

Walker said that, despite his own reservations, lawyers representing Hull's family did not object to U.S. demands that the inquest only play video behind closed doors. It will be shown to the coroner, select witnesses and lawyers representing the family and Britain's Defense Ministry.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
P.O. Box 699
Franklin, IN 46131
letters@thejournalnet.com

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Publisher
Jeffrey W. Owen 736-2744
jowen@thejournalnet.com

Editor
Scarlett Syse 736-2749
syse@thejournalnet.com

Assistant managing editor
Michele Holtkamp-Frye 736-2774
mholtkamp@thejournalnet.com

Assistant managing editor
Jennifer L. Gaskin 736-2721
jgaskin@thejournalnet.com

Circulation director
Mike Warren 736-2711
mwarren@thejournalnet.com

Delivery manager
Bruce Powell 736-2702
bpowell@thejournalnet.com

Advertising director
Christina Cosner 736-2750
ccosner@thejournalnet.com

Administrative manager
Linda Wirey 736-2751
lwirey@thejournalnet.com

Information technology manager
Kathy McDermott 736-2782
kmcdermott@thejournalnet.com

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