

(June 5, 2007) Lipinski Leads Bipartisan Bill to Implement the Iraq Study Group Recommendations

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Bill Provides Consensus Policy Toward Conclusion of War in Iraq

[Washington, D.C.] Today, Congressmen Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Michael McCaul (R-TX), Mark Udall (D-CO), and Frank Wolf (R-VA) were joined by 41 bipartisan members of the House of Representatives in introducing a bill that would implement the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group (ISG). The widely-supported bipartisan bill - which was also introduced in the Senate today - provides an important opportunity to come together and move beyond the current lack of consensus regarding America's Iraq policy.

"With this bill, Democrats and Republicans are joining together for the first time behind a proposal that would bring real change in Iraq, including shifting responsibility to the Iraqi government and facilitating the redeployment of our troops," said Lipinski. "This type of cooperation is absolutely necessary if Congress is going to significantly change the disastrous Iraq policies of this Administration."

The ISG was created in March 2006 at the request of a bipartisan group of members of Congress and was co-chaired by former Secretary of State James Baker and former chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Lee Hamilton. In December 2006, the ISG released its recommendations and outlined a bipartisan approach to bringing a responsible conclusion to the Iraq war.

Among other things, the Iraq Study Group bill would require the Iraqi government to meet real benchmarks in governance and reconciliation in order to receive continued U.S. economic and military support. These benchmarks would not be subject to a presidential waiver. This bill would also require the President to report back to Congress frequently and provide candid assessments of the situation on the ground in Iraq. Furthermore, this bill would shift U.S. military forces from a combat mission to training, equipping, and advising the Iraqi military and security forces. Finally, this bill would set a goal for a redeployment of most troops by March 2008.

"There are two reasons that I am helping to lead on a bipartisan plan," stated Lipinski. "First, foreign policy - especially when are troops are in the field - should not be driven by politics. It is time to come together as Americans to provide the best policy for our nation's future and for our brave troops. Second, history shows that recalcitrant presidents are often only forced to change course when they lose the support of members of their own party. Therefore, real change in Iraq will only come when both parties commit to a new policy direction, as we have done today."

Since the release of the Iraq Study Group report, Congressman Lipinski has been working to build consensus around its core proposals. In February of this year, he introduced H.Res.152 to launch a "diplomatic offensive" on Iraq as the key to achieving stability. The resolution calls on the President of the United States to convene a peace conference for Iraqi leaders (similar to the one that led to the Dayton Accords on Bosnia), diplomatically engage all countries interested in Iraq's future, and provide Congress with greater information regarding security and reconstruction in Iraq.

Lipinski's resolution garnered support from members of the Iraq Study Group, with co-chairman Lee Hamilton writing in a letter to Congressman Lipinski, "I commend you for your excellent proposal. I agree with you completely on the importance of broad-based pressure from a variety of international sources to push Iraqi leaders in the direction of national reconciliation." The proposal for a peace conference also has been embraced by New Mexico Governor and presidential candidate Bill Richardson.