

(June 30, 2007) Lawmakers want to bring back the Iraq Study Group

Lawmakers want to bring Iraq Study Group back

By Jeremy Jacobs

June 30, 2007

Citing overwhelming support, a bipartisan group of lawmakers called on President Bush to reconstitute the Iraq Study Group (ISG).

Reps. Mark Udall (D-Colo.), Frank Wolf (R-Va.), Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), Michael McCaul (R-Texas) and Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.) penned a letter urging the president to support their effort to reconvene the panel.

"Many of us welcomed the ISG's recommendations when the report was first released last year, and many of us believe that the report still provides a comprehensive blueprint for a way forward in Iraq and the Middle East, from both the military and the diplomatic perspective," Udall said.

The congressman cited last week's 355-69 vote in favor of Shays' amendment to the Foreign Operations appropriations bill that would provide \$1 million to the U.S. Institute for Peace to reestablish the Iraq Study Group. The lawmakers worry that without the president's support, the amendment will not be signed into law until after General David Petraeus's progress report on the situation in September.

"Bringing together again the bipartisan members of the ISG to update the report will give Congress and the American people an independent perspective to compare to the Administration's report due in September," Udall said.

Wolf, who played an influential role in the original formation of the ISG, said the president should welcome its return.

"The Bush Administration has nothing to lose by reconstituting the ISG," he said. "In fact, it has everything to gain.

"Everyone wants to see an end to the violence in Iraq," he stated. "Everyone also wants to win the war on terror. Having the ISG go back and provide another independent, bipartisan assessment will take out the venom that is so present in some of the debate."