



218 LAWMAKERS RAISE WHITE FLAG, PASS BLUEPRINT FOR DISASTER IN IRAQ



Washington, DC (March 23, 2007) - The National Commander of The American Legion voiced his organization's strong opposition to the modified FY 2007 Defense Emergency Supplemental Appropriations request which barely passed the House of Representatives today.

"I said it before and I'll say it again, this is a blueprint for disaster," Paul A. Morin said. "We strongly object to tying timelines for withdrawal to much needed funding for our troops on the battlefield. This binding piece of legislation passed in the House today is a road map to failure. It also just sent a clear message that emboldens our enemies."

The bill approved by the House of Representatives today includes two sets of restrictions, one of which ties the hands of battlefield commanders regarding the deployment of troops.

The defense appropriations subcommittee chairman, who is responsible for the deployment restrictions, said he is just trying to make the services follow their own guidance. However, the deployment limits could



endanger lives by either preventing units from being deployed or by having some units leave Iraq when they are still needed.

The bill also includes a timetable for withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq. A phased withdrawal could begin as early as July 1st and would start no later than March 1, 2008, under the bill.

“Putting timelines on military operations is the equivalent to issuing battlefield strategies from the House floor for our troops fighting the good fight against terrorism,” Morin explained. “Our enemies are not stupid. They know that their chance for victory depends on public opinion in opposition of the war.

“Members of Congress should not be armchair generals,” Morin reiterated. “They need to understand that our deployed service members depend on this emergency funding to sustain and achieve their military missions. The American Legion cannot support the \$124 billion supplemental appropriations bill, even though the money is critically needed by troops, as long as it contains provisions that we believe micro-manage the war.

“This ‘slow bleed’ process has begun thanks to just 218 votes,” Morin said. “Nobody hates war more than

the warrior, and nobody wants our troops home more than The American Legion family. Nobody wants to take care of our troops and their families more than we do, but mixing politics, pork barrel spending, and foreign policy is extremely dangerous.”

This legislative request was to be focused on the immediate needs of our troops on the ground and their military leaders, not pork projects like the \$74 million for peanut storage costs.

“We’re talking about war and the safety of our troops, not peanut butter,” Morin said.

Commander Morin strongly urges the Senate to reject this extremely flawed philosophy of timelines, restricting troop movement authority of battlefield commanders, and the superfluous spending.

The American Legion is supportive of many of the other provisions contained in the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Health, and Iraq Accountability Act, but it strongly believes the president’s initial request is not the vehicle for these issues, especially the specific language that sets congressional deadlines and mandatory troop movements.

Morin warned lawmakers: “This legislation sends two clear messages to the insurgents: cooperate and



America will leave in August 2008 or increase your terrorist activities and America will 'cut and run' earlier. Two hundred and eighteen 'yeas' shows us the House does not have the votes to override the president's veto, so let's stop playing scrimmage and send a clean bill to the president."

Founded in 1919, the 2.7 million-member American Legion is the nation's preeminent service organization for veterans of the U.S. armed forces, including active duty, National Guard and Reserves, and their families. A powerful voice for veterans in Washington, The American Legion drafted the original GI Bill and was instrumental in establishing the agency that today is the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs.

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A high-resolution photo of Cmdr. Morin can be downloaded [here](#).

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