

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 29, 2006

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to appoint a special envoy to work full-time with the Iraqi government and other regional players to reaffirm the basic message that the Iraqis must reach a political settlement and to help find immediate, tangible ways to quell the violence, provide services, and create long-term peace and stability.

We commend you for meeting with Prime Minister al-Maliki in Jordan this week and we strongly urge you to advise him that the presence of U.S. forces in Iraq is not open-ended and that the American people are impatient with the failure of the Iraqi political leaders to reach a political compromise.

Your timely meeting will allow you and the Prime Minister to review the situation in Iraq and consider what next steps need to be taken. However, it is unlikely that all decisions can or will be made in a single meeting. Therefore, we believe that a U.S. special envoy, who is known to the Iraqis and other regional players and reports directly to you, is required to follow up on issues discussed at the meeting and ensure continued attention to these matters. U.S. Ambassador Khalilzad continues to do a remarkable job, yet we believe that he has too many other on-the-ground responsibilities to provide undivided attention to the broader initiative that is necessary.

Violence in Iraq has reached critical levels, and the violence is not predominantly instigated by insurgents, but is taking place between Sunnis and Shia. It is our belief that Coalition military action alone cannot end this violence. Indeed, General Abizaid has testified that more U.S. troops will not address the fundamental problems in Iraq. This internal strife can only be stopped by a political solution that is created and implemented by the Iraqis themselves. Prime Minister al-Maliki acknowledged this fact when he stated on Sunday that "The crisis is political, and the ones who can stop the cycle of aggravation and bloodletting of innocents are the politicians." A special envoy can play an indispensable role in assisting the Iraqis in finding solutions.

We have previously written to you on a number of occasions outlining sound changes in U.S. policy that would give our troops and the Iraqi people the best chance for success. In addition to beginning the phased redeployment from Iraq and transitioning the U.S. mission in Iraq within the next 4 to 6 months, we strongly believe your Administration needs to more proactively pressure Iraqi leaders to disarm the militias and to develop a broad-based and sustainable political settlement, including considering amendments to the Constitution to achieve

a fair sharing of power and resources. We also believe it is imperative to convene an international conference and contact group to support a political settlement in Iraq and to preserve Iraq's sovereignty. We hope you will revisit those recommendations in light of the growing crisis confronting Iraq.

In service of this recommended change of course in Iraq strategy, we believe that your discussions, and any follow-up actions by a special envoy, should include addressing the following actions by the Iraqi government, linked to a specific schedule:

- Iraqi government and religious leaders must clearly and publicly condemn all sectarian violence.
- Militias must be disbanded.
- The Iraqi government must begin serving the needs of all Iraqis. For example, evidence indicates that the Shia-dominated Ministry of Health is not assisting Sunnis, and that the government is not paying Sunni soldiers in al-Anbar province. Such actions, whether deliberate or not, lead to increased tensions and strife.
- The Iraqi government must pass legislation which provides for equitable sharing of oil revenues.
- The Iraqi government must begin to use a portion of oil revenues to provide basic services to Iraqis in all areas of the country.
- The Iraqi government must follow through on its commitment to pass constitutional changes to provide for a more inclusive government.
- The Iraqi government must accelerate the process providing for provincial elections, again to allow Sunnis participation in governmental affairs.

We understand that all of these steps are difficult. We are also aware that the Iraqi government has pledged to take many of the above steps but none have been accomplished. In the meantime, our U.S. forces continue to be injured and killed. For these reasons, we believe that appointing a special envoy to Iraq, dedicated to helping the Iraqis reach a political solution supported by other regional players, is a necessary step for the United States to take at this time.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed



Harry Reid

Dick Duck

Carl Klein

Jay Ruppelle