

Tauscher Urges President to Address Failed "Political Surge"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Ellen Tauscher Urges President to Address Failed "Political Surge";

Washington, DC — Before leaving on a bi-partisan congressional delegation to Iraq Rep. Ellen Tauscher sent President George W. Bush the following letter highlighting his administration's failed attempts at finding a political solution to replace his failed military strategy in Iraq. In the letter Rep. Tauscher stresses the "need for accelerated efforts on the administration's part to encourage Iraqi political progress and produce an Iraqi government capable of delivering stability to the Iraqi people." The Congresswoman specifically urges the President "to share what specific efforts (his) administration is undertaking to encourage political reconciliation in Iraq and what future steps are planned to address these negative developments."

August 24, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush

President

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush,

I am traveling today to Iraq with two of my House colleagues in an effort to assess the military and political situation on the ground in that country. As you are well aware both the July 12, 2007 White House Initial Benchmark Assessment Report and the August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq highlight the failure to achieve political reconciliation as a persistent impediment to stability in Iraq.

Four years after invading Iraq, I am deeply concerned that despite the clear military success U.S. troops are having in defeating insurgents, battlefield success is not translating into political progress and power sharing among Iraqi factions. The strategy of using coalition forces to create a secure space for Iraqi leaders to step in and create a functioning government appears to be failing.

While I believe that Ambassador Ryan Crocker and Gen. David Petraeus's September report on the impact of our recent military buildup report will have some value, I do not expect it to contradict this growing trend. If we are serious about not letting Iraq become a failed state, a haven for international terrorism, or wracked by ethnic and religious cleansing when we leave, I believe it is imperative that we use all the tools at our disposal to urge a political settlement in Iraq.

The White House Initial Benchmark Assessment Report of July 12, 2007 reveals that many key indicators of political reconciliation have not been achieved. It notes that the Iraqi government has not made satisfactory progress toward enacting and implementing legislation on de-Ba'athification reform; on legislation to ensure the equitable

distribution of hydrocarbon resources to the people of Iraq; has not established a provincial elections law; and observes that the prerequisites for a successful militia disarmament program are not present.

The August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq predicts that "Iraq's security will continue to improve modestly during the next 12 months but levels of insurgent and sectarian violence will remain high and the Iraqi Government will continue to struggle to achieve national-level political reconciliation and improved governance." It further states that "broadly accepted political compromises required for sustained security, long-term political progress, and economic development are unlikely to emerge unless there is a fundamental shift in the factors driving Iraqi political and security developments."

The NIE also notes alarmingly that the Iraqi Government "will become more precarious over the next six to 12 months because of criticism by other members of the major Shia coalition...The strains of the security situation and absence of key leaders have stalled internal political debates, slowed national decision-making, and increased Maliki's vulnerability to alternative coalitions."

These two reports should give us pause and point to the clear need for accelerated efforts on the administration's part to encourage Iraqi political progress and produce an Iraqi government capable of delivering stability to the Iraqi people. I would like you to share what specific efforts your administration is undertaking to encourage political reconciliation in Iraq and what future steps are planned to address these negative developments.

I also recommend a "Cairo Reconciliation Summit" in October with UN, EU and Arab League sponsorship to provide a forum for sectarian reconciliation and confidence building measures for the Iraqi Government.

I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Ellen O. Tauscher

Member of Congress