

State of New Mexico

New Mexico Senate

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Contact: Gerald González
505-986-4476

Senate Memorial Will Call for Withdrawal from Iraq

Convinced that "we've seen too much and had enough," Senator Gerald Ortiz y Pino will introduce a Memorial during the 2007 regular legislative session calling for the withdrawal of US troops from Iraq.

In announcing his decision, Senator Ortiz y Pino pointed to the service and sacrifices of New Mexico's National Guard troops who have been placed in harm's way by the federal government. The Memorial is designed to draw the attention of the public and the federal Administration to the difficulties US troops are facing both abroad and at home. Over 72 cities have endorsed resolutions of their own calling for an end to US involvement in Iraq.

Individual states retain the right to withhold their National Guard troops from federal service where the state's ability to deal with extreme emergencies is compromised by the troops' deployment for federal purposes. As an example, Louisiana Governor Blanco refused federalization of her National Guard following Hurricane Katrina, despite strong federal pressure to the contrary. New Mexico has been challenged over the utilization of its National Guard in the wake of the recent heavy snowfall.

New Mexico has felt the heavy impacts of the war in Iraq. Because President Bush deployed New Mexico's Army and Air National Guard to seek nonexistent weapons of mass destruction and on the basis of a pretended link to September 11th, over 3,000 New Mexican Guardsmen have already served in Iraq -- some more than once. Nationally, the Department of Defense has reported that National Guard and Reserve troops are being called up at three times their sustainable rate.

At the same time New Mexico has sent its finest to Iraq, the US has lost ground with its allies. Bulgaria and the Ukraine, for example, withdrew all of their forces in 2005. Not only have ally withdrawals depleted the multinational nature of the occupying forces in Iraq by 26,000 troops, but a half dozen other allies are considering their own withdrawals.

Nor has the US occupation made Iraqis more secure through the war. A US State Department poll in 2006 showed the majority of Iraqis want an immediate withdrawal of US troops to help de-escalate the violence. An ABC News-Time Magazine poll in 2005 discovered that two-thirds of Iraqis disapprove of our presence there. Three quarters of US military personnel stationed in Iraq also believe we should withdraw by 2007. The US troops' beliefs certainly reflect the fact that almost half of US casualties are caused by roadside bombs -- a pointless slaughter in which the enemy is never even seen. Counting only Americans, the death toll in Iraq already exceeds the number of Americans lost on September 11th.

An October 2006 Newsweek poll concluded that not only have 58% of Americans concluded that the Bush administration knowingly built a misleading case for the war on Iraq, but 64% believe the US is losing the ground war. The same poll indicated that not only do 66% of Americans believe the war has not made America safer from terrorism, but 53% believe it was a mistake to go to war. A parallel CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll found that 55% of Americans do not see a relationship between the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism.

According to Senator Ortiz y Pino, "What was once paraded before the American public as the most serious threat facing our national security has now become a tar baby that needlessly threatens American lives and our national solvency." The intractable nature of the Iraq war has diminished the federal budget resources that could otherwise be employed to address other national budgetary priorities. In an attempt to control the resulting surge of deficit spending, the new Congress has decided to employ the continuing resolution process.

"It is time for us to forthrightly face the truth that confronts us and to bravely do what that truth calls for -- and so I am introducing a Memorial to do just that. And one that points out that the President may also have violated federal law by his actions" concluded Senator Ortiz y Pino.

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