

JOHN WARNER, VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN

JOHN McCAIN, ARIZONA
JAMES M. INHOFE, OKLAHOMA
PAT ROBERTS, KANSAS
JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA
SUSAN M. COLLINS, MAINE
JOHN ENSIGN, NEVADA
JAMES M. TALENT, MISSOURI
SAXBY CHAMBLISS, GEORGIA
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
ELIZABETH DOLE, NORTH CAROLINA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA

CARL LEVIN, MICHIGAN
EDWARD M. KENNEDY, MASSACHUSETTS
ROBERT C. BYRD, WEST VIRGINIA
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, CONNECTICUT
JACK REED, RHODE ISLAND
DANIEL K. AKAKA, HAWAII
BILL NELSON, FLORIDA
E. BENJAMIN NELSON, NEBRASKA
MARK DAYTON, MINNESOTA
EVAN BAYH, INDIANA
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, NEW YORK

JUDITH A. ANSLEY, STAFF DIRECTOR
RICHARD D. DeBOBES, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

April 18, 2005

Honorable Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Madam Secretary:

We are writing to solicit your support for an initiative that we believe could substantially reduce the daily threats to U.S., coalition, and Iraqi security forces in Iraq.

For some time now, we have been concerned that a number of Iraqis continue to perceive the U.S.-led, multi-national coalition force as "occupiers" and that this perception contributes to inciting instances of insurgency. We are of the view that one step the new Iraqi government should take to strike a blow against the insurgents would be to formally invite the international community, including the United States, to maintain forces in Iraq during this period when Iraqi security forces are being trained and equipped to take full responsibility for the defense of their nation.

During his visit to Iraq on April 2nd, Ranking Member Carl Levin presented the attached letter to key political officials from each of the three principal Iraqi communities. Senator Levin told leaders that Chairman John Warner supported the central thrust of the letter, and had issued the attached press release to that effect on March 31st.

Senator Levin met first with Deputy Interim Prime Minister Barham Salih, who was also representing the then-prospective President in the new transitional government, Jalal Talibani. Mr. Salih said that the Kurds would be supportive of such an invitation. Senator Levin then met with Ibrahim Jaafari, who was also the prospective Prime Minister for the new transitional Iraqi government. Mr. Jaafari also said that as Prime Minister he would support the requested invitation.

Finally, Senator Levin met with two Sunni politicians — the Minister of Industry, Dr. Hajim al-Hassani, who is now the Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly, and Dr. Saleh Mutlak, who is a participant in the negotiations with the Shias and the Kurds on the formation of a new government. They did not commit themselves to the issuance of an invitation.

Changing the perception of some Iraqis of the coalition from one of occupier to one of partner with the Iraqi security forces could facilitate a greater willingness of the Iraqi people to provide information about the insurgents in their midst and could result in a substantial decrease in the death and injuries among Iraqis, and U.S. and coalition forces.

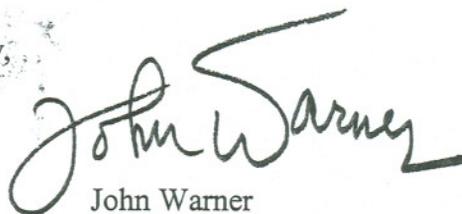
Such an invitation to the international community could also lead more countries, including Muslim countries, to provide troops, training, equipment, and other resources to Iraq.

Accordingly, we ask for your support for a U.S. diplomatic initiative to the new transitional Iraqi government to seek its formal invitation to the international community, including the United States, to maintain a military presence in Iraq during this transitional period, a presence clearly authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin
Ranking Member



John Warner
Chairman

Attachments

JOHN WARNER, VIRGINIA, CHAIRMAN

JOHN MCCAIN, ARIZONA
JAMES M. INHOFE, OKLAHOMA
PAT ROBERTS, KANSAS
JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA
SUSAN M. COLLINS, MAINE
JOHN ENSIGN, NEVADA
JAMES M. TALENT, MISSOURI
SAXBY CHAMBLISS, GEORGIA
LINDSEY O. GRAHAM, SOUTH CAROLINA
ELIZABETH DOLE, NORTH CAROLINA
JOHN CORNYN, TEXAS
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA

CARL LEVIN, MICHIGAN
EDWARD M. KENNEDY, MASSACHUSETTS
ROBERT C. BYRD, WEST VIRGINIA
JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN, CONNECTICUT
JACK REED, RHODE ISLAND
DANIEL K. AKAKA, HAWAII
BILL NELSON, FLORIDA
E. BENJAMIN NELSON, NEBRASKA
MARK DAYTON, MINNESOTA
EVAN BAYH, INDIANA
HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON, NEW YORK

JUDITH A. ANSLEY, STAFF DIRECTOR
RICHARD D. DeBOBES, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

April 2, 2005

Dear Key Iraqi Political Official:

As the Transitional National Assembly and the new Iraqi Government prepare to deal with the several issues facing Iraq, I would like to recommend one matter for expedited attention.

The insurgency in Iraq is presently being fueled by the perception among some Iraqis of the U.S.-led Coalition forces as occupiers. I believe that the new Iraqi Government could strike a blow against the insurgents by helping to change that perception of us by some Iraqis and others in the world from that of occupier to that of partner. To achieve that goal it is essential that the new Iraqi Government formally invite the international community, including the United States, to maintain forces in Iraq during this interim period while Iraqi security forces are being trained.

Changing the Iraqi public's perception of us from one of occupier to one of partner with the Iraqi security forces, could facilitate a greater willingness of the Iraqi people to provide information about the insurgents in their midst and could result in a substantial decrease in the death and injuries among Iraqis and U.S. and Coalition forces.

Such an invitation to the international community could also lead more countries, including Muslim countries, to provide troops, training, equipment and other resources to Iraq.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin
Ranking Member

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 31, 2005

**CHAIRMAN WARNER STATEMENT
ON PACE OF TRANSITION TO NEW GOVERNMENT IN IRAQ**

Today, Senator John W. Warner, R-Va., the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, released the following statement on the pace of the transition to a new government in Iraq:

"As one who admires the courageous steps that the Iraqi people are taking in the transition to democracy, I am concerned over the pace of the National Assembly's forming a new government. While forging consensus on a new government is especially tough given Iraq's history, I think the National Assembly must accelerate the process.

"The millions of Iraqis who went to the polls -- in defiance of terrorists -- had high expectations that the Assembly would seize the momentum of the elections and move swiftly and decisively to form a new government. The eyes of the world are watching, and the Assembly must not fail its people.

"The National Assembly risks losing this moment of opportunity by reverting to the ethnic, tribal, and religious differences that have dominated Iraq's country's recent, tragic past. The road map is clear: the Assembly must build the road to democracy on a foundation of unity, tolerance and mutual respect, and by finding ways to work together, instead of against one another.

"The Iraqi people do not want just a 'caretaker' interim government; they want strong leadership to bring about a greater degree of security and infrastructure improvement as they transition to the permanent government.

"To that end, each day of delay is a day that highlights differences instead of common ground. Each day of delay emboldens those who oppose freedom and democracy. Each day of delay brings more injury and loss of life. As General Abizaid, the commander of U.S. Central Command, says, 'The more uncertainty, the greater chance for escalated violence.'

"Once the interim government is formed, a further step can help improve security:

"The majority of Iraqi citizens recognize that they need the continued assistance of U.S. and coalition forces to establish nationwide order and develop their security forces. However, some polls of Iraqis, together with anecdotal evidence, reveal a lingering measure of resentment to the presence of foreign troops in Iraq. Insurgents, who certainly do not have the best interests of the Iraqi people in mind, try to manipulate this sentiment to foment unrest and justify their terrorist acts.

"The interim government can strike a blow against the insurgents by formally affirming the continuing need for coalition forces in Iraq, a presence clearly authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 1546.

"Senator Levin and I are firmly of the view that this important step would establish officially what is already evident: that coalition forces are indispensable partners in securing the country, itself an essential step toward Iraq rejoining the world community. By affirming the need for the coalition's presence, the new government will help Iraqis accelerate their own journey to self-sufficiency."

| [Graphics Version](#) | [Press Releases](#) | [Home](#) |