



## Senator Dianne Feinstein Calls for Strategic, Phased Downsizing of U.S. Troops in Iraq

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**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today called for the strategic, phased downsizing of U.S. forces in Iraq and full withdrawal by the end of 2007. Senator Feinstein spoke at a news conference in support of a new report by the Center for American Progress, *Strategic Redeployment 2.0: A Progressive Strategy for Iraq*.

Senator Feinstein was joined by **John Podesta**, the Center's President and CEO, as well as by the report's co-authors, **Lawrence Korb**, Senior Fellow of the Center for American Progress and Senior Adviser for the Center for Defense Information, and **Brian Katulis**, Director of Democracy and Public Diplomacy at the Center for American Progress.

The report, *Strategic Redeployment 2.0*, builds on a September 2005 report by Korb and Katulis, which first called for a strategic redeployment of U.S. forces in Iraq. In the report released today, the authors find that increased sectarian strife in Iraq and growing instability in the Gulf region during the past six months, have only intensified the need for a responsible and plausible exit strategy from Iraq by 2007. Korb and Katulis further argue that this redeployment of forces will give the United States the moral, political, and military power to focus on other national security priorities critical to the war on terror, such as the growing nuclear threat of Iran.

Among the report's recommendations:

- Reduce U.S. troop presence at a rate of about 9,000 per month, from its present level of about 130,000 to 60,000 by the end of 2006 and to virtually zero by the end of 2007; and
- Shift the central paradigm of the U.S. mission in Iraq from nation building to conflict resolution.

To view the entire report, please visit:

<http://www.americanprogress.org/StrategicDeploymentTwo>

*Following are Senator Feinstein's remarks, as delivered:*

“Good afternoon. I am pleased to be joined here today by John Podesta, President and CEO, Center for American Progress; Lawrence J. Korb, Senior Fellow, Center for American

Progress, and Senior Adviser, Center for Defense Information; and Brian Katulis, Director of Democracy and Public Diplomacy, Center for American Progress.

The purpose of this press conference is to release the second strategic plan for the U.S. mission in Iraq. I invited them to Capitol Hill where some of the most important policy decisions are, after all, made with respect to the war.

Many people don't know this, but in the FY'06 Defense Authorization bill, the Senate, by a vote of 79-19, put in this language: 'calendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty, with Iraqi security forces taking the lead for the security of a free and sovereign Iraq, thereby creating the conditions for the **phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq.**'

That is the policy of the United States Senate.

Seven months ago Mr. Korb and Mr. Katulis issued a report on Iraq which carried a plan for this strategic redeployment of American forces. At the time I sent it to every United States Senator and recommended that they read it closely. I found myself believing that it truly presented a positive exit strategy.

Now, they have issued an updated report. And I think their message today is even more important.

They offer a reasonable and specific plan for **downsizing and transitioning** the United States military mission.

The Report notes the progress made with Iraqi security forces:

- 250,000 have been trained to date;
- 47% increase in Iraqi battalions classified as 'in the lead' or 'fully independent' from October 2005 to February 2006; and
- 27 National Police Force battalions capable of combat operations with 10 more classified as 'in the lead.'

This signifies to me that Iraqis must now step up themselves to secure their cities, their towns and their borders. It is now, in my opinion, their responsibility to ensure the streets are safe and to reconcile religious and ethnic differences.

The growing sectarian violence is real, it's serious, and is the beginning of a new internecine struggle. But the United States should not be drawn into the middle of it.

The basic elements of the government are now in place:

- a Constitution has been approved by Iraqis;

- the election of a 275-Member Parliament has been achieved; and
- a Prime Minister-designate who will have Cabinet Members in place in a few short weeks.

Now, more work is required, for example in amending the Constitution. **But a sovereign political framework now exists in Iraq that can grow and move forward.**

In light of these security and political developments, these experts, Mr. Korb and Mr. Katulis, advocate a strategic downsizing of our presence in Iraq and a redeployment of our forces to other areas critical to the war on terror.

The report calls for reducing our armed forces by 70,000 in 2006. That's about 9,000 military personnel a month.

They further recommend that nearly all U.S. troops leave Iraq by the end of 2007.

**This represents a gradual, balanced exit strategy. It does not reflect a sudden or abrupt plan or chaotic downsizing.**

For U.S. armed forces mission remaining in the Iraqi theater, their focus should shift primarily to training and logistical support of all Iraqi security forces.

I believe this report represents sound strategy. I believe that it should be given serious consideration. And I certainly would support its findings as the key to a change of mission in Iraq.

So, now if I might, I'd like to present the CEO of the Foundation, none other than John Podesta.”