



U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein to Give the National Democratic Radio Address

March 17, 2006

Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) will deliver the National Democratic Radio Address on Saturday. Senator Feinstein noted that the “American people expect 2006 to be a year of significant transition” in Iraq.

She urged President Bush to “exercise the leadership necessary to bring Iraq’s political factions together” and head off a civil war that could decimate Iraq and further endanger Americans. The text of the address as prepared follows below:

Good morning. I’m Senator Dianne Feinstein

This week is the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq – a country that remains bitterly divided. Sectarian violence is on the rise. And each day civil war draws closer.

On Monday, the President acknowledged for the first time that Iraqi forces must take control of more of Iraq by the end of this year.

In taking this position, he inched closer to the position held by Democrats and by the American people, who believe that Iraqis must take primary responsibility in 2006 – this year -- for securing and governing their country, so our troops can responsibly be redeployed.

The President’s shift was a welcomed departure from an administration that has blindly insisted on “staying the course.”

But we still need to hear a plan for making this happen.

The American people expect 2006 to be a year of significant transition.

Congress overwhelmingly supports this policy.

Now, the President has an obligation to tell us how he is going to achieve it.

If success depended solely on the United States military, the outcome of this war would never be in doubt. We have the finest armed forces in the world.

Unfortunately, though, success also depends upon our country’s political leadership making smart choices and the Iraqis making the political compromises necessary to unite their country and defeat this burgeoning insurgency.

To accomplish this task, we need the President to urgently exercise the leadership necessary to bring Iraq's political factions together.

In no uncertain terms, the President must immediately inform the Iraqi people that they must get their political house in order.

They must get a government and key ministries up and running.

They must quickly secure their streets by ramping up the deployment of an effective police force.

And they must reconcile differences between the Sunnis and the Shia.

Iraqis must know that we will exit on our terms, not theirs.

It's now three years into the war and we are fighting a growing insurgency.

Even administration officials acknowledge that we've made little progress on the political, security and reconstruction fronts.

It didn't have to be this way, but the administration's dangerous incompetence has made the job harder.

And now that Iraq is on the brink of a civil war, it is more important than ever to do it right.

The political leaders who cherry-picked pre-war intelligence... who failed to plan to win the peace... who sent our troops into battle without body armor... must now show the American people they have learned from their mistakes.

They must show the American people that they do have a strategy to make the long overdue progress needed in Iraq, and shown that they are ready to pursue it.

We live in a dangerous world.

We need leaders who will pursue policies that are tough and smart, leaders who can simultaneously lead us successfully out of Iraq, battle terrorism, protect our communities and prepare the homeland for disasters like Katrina and the Avian Flu.

This is the work before us.

It will require us to roll up our sleeves and work together to protect our country. The safety of the American people is the Democrats top priority.

We believe in real security, and restoring our strength at home and leadership in the world.

I'm Dianne Feinstein. Thanks for listening.