

United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations

WASHINGTON, DC

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U.S. Senate Unanimously Passes Bipartisan Resolution On Iraq

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a resolution on Iraq which recognizes the importance of the upcoming elections to Iraq's future. The resolution also recognizes the enormous sacrifices that American soldiers and diplomats have made in Iraq and expresses the ongoing commitment of the United States to the Iraqi people. Senators Lugar, Lieberman, McCain, Casey, and Graham co-sponsored the resolution with Senator Kerry.

Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry (D-MA) issued the following statement:

“For seven years, Iraq was our most divisive war since Vietnam and at critical moments, all sides were quick to point out the mistakes of others and too slow to recognize our own. That time is over. Today, we in the Senate speak with one voice. America's involvement in Iraq will change, but our commitment to the people of Iraq will not end. We are sending a strong bipartisan message that America remains deeply invested in Iraq's stability, democracy, and well-being as Iraqis enter a new phase in their country's political life.

“While we will continue to debate and sometimes differ, we are hopeful that an era of bitter disagreement is finally coming to an end. We all agree that while America cannot solve all of Iraq's problems, we can and must play a vital role in helping Iraqis tackle the most pressing ones.

“Recent events in Afghanistan and Iran show that, while elections are vital to building legitimate institutions, they are also moments of vulnerability. We are watching closely to ensure that Iraq's elections are free and fair.

“The President, Vice President, and the entire Administration have worked tirelessly to ensure that Iraq doesn't become a forgotten front. They have struck a tough balance between direct and continuous engagement while recognizing that Iraqis—not Americans—will determine the country's future.”

The full text of the resolution is attached below:

111th CONGRESS
2d Session
S. RES. 437

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the positive effect of the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections on Iraq's political reconciliation and democratic institutions.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

March 4, 2010

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. LIEBERMAN, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. CASEY, and Mr. GRAHAM) submitted the following resolution.

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the positive effect of the upcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections on Iraq's political reconciliation and democratic institutions.

Whereas on February 27th, 2009, President Obama declared that the United States' "clear and achievable goal" is "an Iraq that is sovereign, stable, and self-reliant" and that the United States will achieve that goal by working "to promote an Iraqi government that is just, representative, and accountable";

Whereas in December 2009, Iraq's elected officials ended months of deadlock, passed a new election law, and scheduled parliamentary elections for March 7, 2010;

Whereas nearly 100,000 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines continue to serve in Iraq, marking the United States' largest current overseas deployment;

Whereas Iraq's future sovereignty, stability, and democracy is threatened by serious internal and external challenges, including—

- (1) continuing attempts by Al Qaeda in Iraq to perpetrate mass casualty terrorist attacks intended to paralyze the Iraqi state and reignite sectarian violence;
- (2) some surrounding countries' malign and destabilizing interference in Iraq's internal affairs and their incomplete diplomatic recognition of Iraq;
- (3) unresolved disputes over internal boundaries, including the City of Kirkuk;
- (4) incomplete reintegration of Sunni Arab communities in Iraq; and
- (5) ongoing incidents of civil and human rights abuses in a diverse, multi-confessional society;

Whereas, while the United States appreciates the profound conviction of the Iraqi people to ensure that the Ba'ath party never returns to power in Iraq, the process by which scores of candidates have been disqualified from participating in the March 7, 2010 elections—

- (1) has not met international standards of electoral transparency and fairness;
- (2) was interpreted by many Iraqis as politically motivated; and
- (3) risks diminishing participation in elections;

Whereas the United States has a clear, strong, and enduring national interest in helping the people of Iraq to establish a stable, representative, and democratic state;

Whereas the United States committed, in the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Republic of Iraq On the Withdrawal of United States Forces from Iraq and the Organization of Their Activities during Their Temporary Presence in Iraq (referred to in this resolution as the “Status of Forces Agreement”) signed in November 2008, to redeploy—

- (1) all combat forces from Iraqi cities by June 30, 2009; and
- (2) all United States forces from Iraq by December 31, 2011;

Whereas United States combat forces successfully redeployed from Iraq’s cities by June 30, 2009, in accordance with the Status of Forces Agreement, and are likely to carry out further reductions in the number of United States military forces in Iraq during the months after the March 7, 2010 elections;

Whereas the United States and Iraq agreed in the Strategic Framework Agreement, also signed in November 2008, to “continue to foster close cooperation concerning defense and security arrangements”;

Whereas the March 7, 2010 elections and the subsequent government formation process will mark a period of exceptional importance for the future of Iraq;

Whereas Iraq conducted provincial elections in January 2009 that were free from widespread violence and the results of which were recognized as legitimate by the international community and the Iraqi people;

Whereas several of Iraq’s main electoral blocs have committed to a Code of Conduct meant to ensure fair, transparent, and inclusive elections: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

- (1) reaffirms the United States’ strong commitment to building a robust, long-term partnership with Iraq that strengthens Iraq’s security, stability, economy, and democracy;
- (2) recognizes the United States’ clear and enduring interest in partnering with the people of Iraq in building a stable, representative, successful, democratic state;
- (3) urges the Administration—

(A) To devote continued high-level attention and support for the people and Government of Iraq toward these goals, in particular during the critical months after the March 7, 2010 elections;

(B) to work with the international community to provide all necessary support for Iraqi elections, including technical support for Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission and assistance for domestic and international monitoring;

(4) calls upon all parties within Iraq—

(A) to ensure that the March 7, 2010 parliamentary elections are free, fair, inclusive, and without violence or intimidation; and

(B) to refrain from rhetoric or actions that might undercut the legitimacy of such elections or inflame communal tensions;

(5) urges the countries surrounding Iraq—

(A) to refrain from exercising malign and destabilizing interference in Iraq's internal affairs; and

(B) to allow the people of Iraq to determine their own future;

(6) calls for the timely formation of an inclusive, effective, and representative new Iraqi government after the March 7, 2010 parliamentary elections;

(7) reaffirms that, while United States military forces redeploy from Iraq in the months after the March 7, 2010 elections, the United States must remain engaged in partnering with the people of Iraq to help them in building a stable, representative, and successful democratic state;

(8) expresses gratitude to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces, the Foreign Service, and other Federal Government agencies, for their service, sacrifices, and heroism in Iraq; and

(9) commends the people of Iraq for—

(A) the courage they have shown;

(B) the sacrifices they have endured; and

(C) the hard-won gains they have made in fighting terrorism, finding peace, and building democracy.

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