

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENDING THE WAR IN IRAQ

“We don’t need debate; we don’t need non-binding resolutions; we need to end this war. In order to get the Iraqi people to take responsibility for their country, we must show them that we are serious about leaving, and the best way to do that is to actually start leaving.” -- John Edwards

There is no military solution to the chaos in Iraq. Instead, the Iraqi people must solve this problem politically by taking responsibility for their country. By leaving Iraq, the Iraqi people, regional powers, and the entire international community will be forced to engage in the search for a political solution that will end the sectarian violence and create a stable Iraq.

Before they will, we must show them that we are serious about leaving by actually starting to leave. John Edwards has called on Congress to block President Bush’s escalation of war. Edwards strongly supports the supplemental spending bill passed by both Houses of Congress and vetoed by President Bush that funds the troops while including a timetable for withdrawal. He has called for Congress to respond to the President’s veto by sending back the same bill—and doing this as many times as it takes for the President to grant the American people’s desire to end the war. Edwards also supports the following steps:

- **Stop the Escalation and Start the Drawdown:**

Edwards will cap funding for the troops in Iraq at current levels to stop the surge and implement an immediate drawdown of 40,000 to 50,000 combat troops. Any troops beyond that level should be redeployed immediately.

- **Require Troops to Be Ready:**

Edwards will prohibit funding to deploy any new troops to Iraq that do not meet real readiness standards and that have not been properly trained and equipped. American tax dollars should be used to train and equip our troops, not to escalate the war.

- **Clarify the Lack of Legal Foundation for the War:**

The 2002 authorization did not give President Bush the power to use U.S. troops to police a civil war. Edwards believes that Congress should make it clear that President Bush exceeded his authority long ago. The president now needs to end the war and ask Congress for new authority to manage the withdrawal of the U.S. military presence and to help Iraq achieve stability.

- **Withdraw Troops within a Year:**

Edwards will require a complete withdrawal of combat troops in Iraq in about a year and prohibit permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq. After withdrawal, he will retain sufficient forces in the region to contain the conflict and ensure that instability in Iraq does not spillover into other countries, creating a regional war, a terrorist haven, or a genocide.

- **Take Other Steps to Stabilize Iraq:**

Edwards will intensify U.S. efforts to train the Iraqi security forces. He will also step up U.S. diplomatic efforts by engaging in direct talks with all the nations in the region, including Iran and Syria, to bring a political solution to the sectarian violence inside Iraq, including through a peace conference.