

Many Military Leaders Have Pointed Out: The Solution in Iraq Is Primarily Political, Diplomatic and Economic

Democrats are calling for a new direction in Iraq – one that holds the Iraqi government accountable with benchmarks for its promises on political progress, including setting a responsible timeline for withdrawal of U.S. combat troops that tells the Iraqis that Iraq’s future is in their hands. Success in Iraq requires more than military force; we must have diplomatic and economic initiatives to bring stability. In contrast, the President’s only answer is an open-ended commitment to a war without end – sending in yet more U.S. troops. Even General David Petraeus, head of the President’s troop-increase effort, has stated flatly: **“There is no military solution to a problem like that in Iraq.”** Following are quotes from several military leaders pointing out that the solution in Iraq is primarily political, diplomatic, and economic.

General Wesley Clark (retired)

“House Democrats have offered a responsible approach that protects our Armed Forces, the troops and their families, and encourages both Iraqis and the Bush Administration to work more effectively to salvage some success in ending what has been a tragically mistaken and failing mission. This conflict must be resolved politically -- military efforts alone are insufficient.” [Statement endorsing House Democrats’ Iraq plan, 3/14/07]

Lt. Gen. Peter Chiarelli

Former Deputy Commander of Multinational Force Iraq

“The proper political pieces must be in place in order for any of the military, economic or social initiatives to take hold and to flourish. We need to get out of thinking this is solely a military conflict where we must simply apply more U.S. or coalition and Iraqi forces against an enemy that we can destroy. All our nation's strengths -- diplomatic, economic, political -- must be leveraged to help the Iraqis find their way through this process.” [DOD briefing transcript, 12/8/06]

Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno

Deputy Commander of Multinational Force Iraq

“It's clear you cannot solve this problem militarily. You have to have the combination of military, economic and diplomatic things that we have to do.” [Newsweek, 12/31/06]

Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, (retired):

First Head of Training of Troops in Iraq

“I see little evidence with this new surge plan that the Administration has corrected its biggest failure... Time and again, they’ve shown a tendency to focus almost exclusively on military solutions to problems, without leveraging the full economic, political, and diplomatic might of our nation.” [National Journal, 2/3/07]

Col. Peter Bayer:

Served in Iraq

“In counterinsurgency, you really have to apply all of your military, economic, political, and diplomatic resources... While we have applied military with a capital ‘M,’ there has often been a real disconnect ...about tackling the problem of reconstruction and economic development.” [National Journal, 2/3/07]