

Rep. Schakowsky: It's Time to Bring Them Home

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Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-9th) Monday called for an end to America's military occupation of Iraq saying, "It is time for our soldiers to start the journey home."

In a written statement, Schakowsky, who represents the Des Plaines community in the U.S. House of Representatives, harangued the Bush Administration for its strategy in the war torn nation.

"Under false pretenses, the Bush Administration took our nation to war against a county that did not pose imminent threat to our security," Schakowsky said. "In Iraq today, over 1,300 U.S. soldiers and estimated 100,000 civilians are dead."

She addressed the country's perceived obligation to "fix" Iraq -- because the U.S. had "now...broken it" -- by stressing, "The Administration has left us with no good options whatsoever.

"The worst choice, however, would be to continue to do more of the same, and watch the body count grow."

Schakowsky, who in 2002 voted against the resolution authorizing military force in Iraq, pushed Monday for a political solution to the military occupation. She said the U.S., with help from the

international community, should provide financial and material assistance after the Jan. 30 elections in Iraq and a new government takes over.

Despite fears of civil war and violence against Christians, westerners and women, which some experts forecast would follow a hasty U.S. withdrawal, Schakowsky called for American troops to return stateside and suggested diplomacy as a way to help address these vulnerable populations.

"These are very real concerns that, sadly, weren't even considered when the U.S. invaded..." Schakowsky said in her statement.

Beyond mentions of financial and material assistance, along with diplomacy efforts, the congresswoman didn't offer a plan to remove the troops from Iraq, but simply called for their prompt return.

"All of us care deeply about our brave soldiers who are doing the very best they can under near impossible conditions," Schakowsky said. "It is time to bring them home."

A representative for Schakowsky said Tuesday the congresswoman has been in touch with fellow members of Congress as well as individuals and groups outside Capitol Hill to discuss further options for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq. "This is an ongoing process," Schakowsky rep Nadeam Elshami told the Journal.

Offering a response to Schakowsky's statement, Jim Morrell, a spokesperson for the White House, told the Journal President Bush certainly understands and appreciates the sacrifice made by troops and their families. The president "wants to see them come home as soon as possible and they will come home when the job is complete."

Morrell said vital work is still being done to ensure the safety of Iraqi elections and a new government, as well as train Iraqi security forces. "When this vital work is done," Morrell explained, "then [troops] will come home."