

Small number of Democrats speak out against war on Iraq, while poll numbers show majority of Americans support war

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The News with Brian Williams - CNBC

Is it un-American to speak out against the Bush plan to take on Iraq? Is it democratic to ridicule and threaten those who do? Call it the loyal opposition, caught in the cross fire tonight as the nation prepares to go to war, perhaps, and a former vice president ignites a fire storm.

Announcer: THE NEWS on CNBC continues. Here again is Brian Williams. WILLIAMS: Good evening once again and welcome back. Today our friend, Rush Limbaugh, told his radio listeners he almost stayed home from work, not due to any health reasons but because he was so livid at the speech given yesterday by former Vice President Al Gore criticizing the Bush administration's apparent march to war in Iraq. The anger that physically hobbled Mr. Limbaugh positively ignited his callers today, at least of whom called Mr. Gore un-American for what he said yesterday. While it can't quite be called an anti-war movement, not quite yet, it could perhaps be called a loyal opposition. It is a so far small band of lawmakers, current and former, and some citizens who are willing to say, 'Stop. Let's not do this, at least not until we've thought it through.' But Mr. Gore didn't stop there in yesterday's speech.

Mr. AL GORE: I am deeply concerned that the course of action that we are presently embarked upon with respect to Iraq has the potential to seriously damage our ability to win the war against terrorism.

WILLIAMS: The White House reaction was immediate, calling Gore irrelevant and out of touch with his own party. But pollster John Zogby could be on to something here.

Mr. JOHN ZOGBY: I think that what he was sensing is that there is a--an intense and growing anti-war sentiment in this country, and what he was doing was addressing that group of people. And I think he did so in very strong terms and drew a line in the sand, in fact.

Mr. GORE: I don't think we should allow anything to diminish our focus on the necessity for avenging the 3,000 Americans who were murdered and dismantling that network of terrorists that we know were responsible for it.

WILLIAMS: Some Democrats have taken the Gore line even further.

Representative JIM McDERMOTT (Democrat, Washington): The president of the United States will lie to the American people in order to get us in to this war.

Representative JAN SCHAKOWSKY (Democrat, Illinois): Why are we going in to this war? Why are we squandering the goodwill that's been created internationally to fight this war on terrorism?

WILLIAMS: Democrats are frustrated at a White House they say is trying to politicize a war. Today Tom Daschle finally, publicly made that charge.

Senator TOM DASCHLE (Democrat, Majority Leader): I must say I was very chagrined that the vice president would go to a congressional district yesterday and make the--make the assertion that somebody ought to vote--that--that they ought to vote for this particular Republican candidate because he a war supporter. If that doesn't politicize this war, I don't know what does.

WILLIAMS: But recent poll numbers show a majority of Americans do favor military action against Iraq, even if the former vice president isn't one of them.

TEXT:

USA Today/CNN/Gallup

Support military action against Iraq?

Yes 57% No 38% Don't know 5%

+/- 3%

Mr. ZOGBY: Gore has to shore up his base among, you know, the--the true believers in--in the Democratic Party. And among those true believers, that's where you find the strongest anti-war sentiment.