

U.S. Senate war funding votes fall short

by Nicole Debevec - UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Senate Republicans blocked the latest Democratic effort to end the war in Iraq, rejecting a \$50 billion funding package that has a withdrawal timetable. The 53-to-45 vote fell seven short of the 60 votes required for the measure to clear procedural hurdles, the Washington Post reported Friday. A GOP alternative that would have appropriated \$70 billion without the withdrawal timetable failed 45-53. The Democratic bill, approved by the House earlier, would have required President George Bush to begin a phased redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq within 30 days of its enactment and would have shifted the military role to specific missions. Defense Secretary Robert Gates Thursday said the Pentagon did not have the resources to shift funding to field operations and would have to furlough personnel and close bases if Congress did not pass an emergency spending bill Bush would sign. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said the Democrat-backed bill "sets a reasonable goal for the end of combat operations." Minority Leader Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said, "We should not leave our forces in the field without the funding that they need to accomplish the mission for which they have been deployed."

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