

Democrats agree to Iraq plan

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Democrats in the U.S. Congress have agreed to a \$124 billion Iraq war funding bill that includes a plan to begin pulling troops out of the country.

U.S. President George Bush has promised to veto a measure that includes any troop withdrawal timetable and congressional Democrats acknowledged they didn't have the votes to withstand such a veto.

"On Iraq, the American people want a new direction and we are providing it," U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., said of the plan that both houses of Congress are expected to approve this week, The New York Times reported.

The bill worked out by House and Senate negotiators ties troop withdrawal to "reconciliation initiatives" by the Iraqi government, The Los Angeles Times reported. If no progress is made, withdrawal would begin July 1. If the Iraqi government is making progress, the withdrawal would begin Oct. 1.

Bush said Monday that he remains opposed to any "artificial timetable of withdrawal."

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