

Bush: 'Heavy fighting' ahead in Iraq

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. President George Bush warned of "heavy fighting" in the weeks ahead for U.S. military personnel in Iraq.

Bush opened a Thursday news conference with remarks in support of an Iraq war funding bill before the U.S. Congress. The funds would support his "surge," in which additional troops are inserted to secure certain areas of the country.

"This summer's going to be a critical time for the new strategy," Bush said. "The last of five reinforcement brigades we are sending to Iraq is scheduled to arrive in Baghdad by mid-June.

"As these reinforcements carry out their missions, the enemies of a free Iraq, including al-Qaida and illegal militias, will continue to bomb and murder in an attempt to stop us. We're going to expect heavy fighting in the weeks and months."

Bush suggested the American people wait until September when U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus has promised an assessment of the strategy.

"I would like to see us in a different configuration at some point in time in Iraq. However, it's going to require taking control of the capital and the best way to do that was to follow the recommendations of General Petraeus," Bush said.

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