

Senate mulls new U.S. role in Iraq

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senate Democrats are suggesting alternatives to pulling troops out of Iraq that include redefining the military mission.

One proposal put forward by Sen. Ken Salazar, D-Colo., which has attracted support from six Republican senators, calls for turning the Iraq Study Group's recommendations into official policy and call for removing troops from combat in 2008, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

Another approach fronted by Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., was based on a compromise measure that would change the mission for U.S. troops from combat to counter-terrorism and border protection. The measure contains no mention of troop withdrawals, the report said.

U.S. President George Bush has vetoed one war-funding bill because it contained a withdrawal timeline. Bush said it makes no sense to tell the enemy when they will have free rein over Iraq.

However, the newspaper said loyalty to Bush on the war among Republicans is slipping, most notably Sens. Olympia Snowe of Maine, Chuck Hagel of Nebraska and Gordon Smith of Oregon.

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