

U.S. Republican rift on Iraq grows

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Senior U.S. Republicans are trying to rein in senators who are siding with Democrats trying to establish policy on the war in Iraq. At a speech Tuesday in Cleveland, U.S. President George Bush appealed to lawmakers to hold off on legislative responses at least until September, when the top commander in Iraq, U.S. Army Gen. David Petraeus delivers a progress report on the military and political efforts there. U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney attended the weekly closed-door Republican luncheon on Capitol Hill to appeal for party unity, The Washington Post reported Wednesday. One of the Republicans unhappy with the Bush administration's approach, Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, said the status quo wasn't working. "I think we should continue to ratchet up the pressure -- in addition to our words -- to let the White House know we are very sincere," he said in the Post article. Among compromise measures being circulated in the Senate is changing the role of the military to counter-terrorism, which would require far fewer troops in Iraq, the report said.

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