

Democrats stage all-night Iraq debate

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Senate was in a marathon debate on the war in Iraq Wednesday after Democrats forced an all-night session on setting a U.S. troop withdrawal timeline. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., said he called the session to highlight Republicans' stalling tactics, CNN reported. "They are protecting the president rather than protecting our troops," Reid said. "They are denying us an up-or-down -- yes or no -- vote on the most important issue our country faces." Democrats have been unable to secure the necessary 60 votes needed to advance amendments to a war-funding bill to a full floor vote. One of the amendments calls for U.S. combat troops to be pulled from Iraq by April 30, 2008, while another would require U.S. President George Bush's administration to come up with contingency plans by the end of the year. Sen. Jon Kyl R-Ariz., told The Washington Post the overnight debate was theatrical. "The amendment will look just as bad at 3 a.m. as it does at 3 p.m.," Kyl said. "The Democrats' all-night debate is nothing more than a publicity stunt -- as Democrats have freely admitted."

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