

In reversal, leading pro-war Democrat calls for U.S. withdrawal from Iraq

Liz Sidoti
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — One of Congress' most hawkish and influential Democrats called Thursday for an immediate U.S. withdrawal from Iraq, sparking bitter and personal salvos from both sides in a growing Capitol Hill uproar over President Bush's war policies.

"It's time to bring them home," said Rep. John Murtha, a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, choking back tears during remarks to reporters. "Our military has

accomplished its mission and done its duty."

The comments by the Pennsylvania lawmaker, who has spent three decades in the House, hold particular weight because he is close to many military commanders and has enormous credibility with his colleagues on defense issues. He voted for the war in 2002, and remains the top Democrat on the House Appropriations defense subcommittee.

"Our troops have become the primary target of the insurgency. They are united against U.S. forces and we have become a catalyst for violence,"

he said. "The war in Iraq is not going as advertised. It is a flawed policy wrapped in illusion."

In a biting response, Republicans criticized Murtha's position as one of abandonment and surrender and accused Democrats of playing politics with the war and recklessly pushing a "cut and run" strategy.

"They want us to retreat. They want us to wave the white flag of surrender to the terrorists of the world," said House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill.

Rep. Sam Johnson, R-Texas,

a 29-year Air Force veteran who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam for nearly seven years, called Murtha's position unconscionable and irresponsible. "We've got to support our troops to the hilt and see this mission through," he said.

Underscoring the rising emotions of the war debate, Murtha uncharacteristically responded to Vice President Dick Cheney's comments this week that Democrats were spouting "one of the most dishonest and reprehensible charges" about the Bush administration's use of

intelligence before the war.

"I like guys who've never been there that criticize us who've been there," said Murtha, a former Marine. "I like that. I like guys who got five deferments and never been there and send people to war, and then don't like to hear suggestions about what needs to be done."

Referring to Bush, Murtha added, "I resent the fact, on Veterans Day, he criticized Democrats for criticizing them."

The White House fired back from Busan, South Korea, where Bush was meeting with

Asian leaders.

"Congressman Murtha is a respected veteran and politician who has a record of supporting a strong America," said White House press secretary Scott McClellan. "So it is baffling that he is endorsing the policy positions of Michael Moore and the extreme liberal wing of the Democratic Party."

"The eve of an historic democratic election in Iraq is not the time to surrender to the terrorists," McClellan said. "After seeing his statement, we remain baffled — nowhere does he explain how retreating from Iraq makes America safer."

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research)," said Eric Moulton, a third-year electrical engineering student. "I'm catching up with graduate students."

Moulton started doing research with Tangali Sudarshan during the summer and has continued researching silicon carbide — "the next silicon." Moulton said he was timid at first about getting involved in research as an undergraduate but that his experience doing research has been more than worthwhile, even convincing him to stay at USC for graduate school instead of moving to Georgia Tech.

Fourth-year art studio student Nikolay Oskolkov has

been doing his research on the "Madonna of the Rocks," a painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Through studying da Vinci's methods, Oskolkov is producing a full-scale reproduction of the famous painting and said the confidence he's gained from working with all-natural paints and materials will help him in creating original paintings.

Julie Morris, director of OUR, said there shouldn't be a set timeline for students to start doing research.

"It's really all when the student is ready," Morris said. "The students need to take ownership of their project." When they are, she said the office is ready to give funding "as

soon as students start applying."

A first-year student in the audience asked the panel of undergraduate researchers, which included third-year theatre and economics student Abbie Isaac, what he should do to get involved in research. Moulton compared the experience to "becoming a graduate student as an undergrad."

"It's going to the library when nobody tells you to go because you want to find out more," Moulton said. Pastides said there are opportunities for research "right now," but that students must be motivated enough to seek them out.

"The notion of learning how to inquire and then to follow

through with an organized approach to finding a solution to that inquiry is really what gives an individual a competitive edge in life," Pastides said in a news release. "And by working closely with a USC professor, students will be able to understand and learn from that professor. Being involved in research also gives them an advantage when applying to graduate school or looking for a job after graduation."

OUR is located in the Byrnes building. For more information, visit their Web site, www.sc.edu/our.

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