

December 6, 2006 **Press Release** | Contact: Danielle Langone (202) 225-6416

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio released the following statement regarding the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group:

“The Iraq Study Group significantly advanced the debate today on how to stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home. I commend the seriousness with which the ISG went about their work, and the spirit of bipartisanship in which it was done.

“In many respects, the report echoes the strategy to phase down U.S. involvement in Iraq that I first proposed in a letter to the president in February 2005 (online here: <http://defazio.house.gov/021705FAStatement.shtml>) and reiterated in November 2005 (online here: <http://defazio.house.gov/112905DERelease.shtml>).

“The ISG rightly notes that:

“There is no military solution to the violence in Iraq, which is primarily the result of sectarian conflicts, not foreign terrorists;

“An open-ended military commitment in Iraq undermines the ability to resolve the conflict in Iraq; and,

“A rough timeline for withdrawal will pressure Iraqi leaders to make the political compromises necessary to bring stability to that country.

“I also agree that many of the specific tactics the report recommends make a lot of sense, including accelerating the training and equipping of Iraqi forces, removing U.S. troops from frontline combat duties, instituting aggressive diplomacy, and renouncing any intent to establish permanent bases or control over Iraqi oil.

“The one major area of disagreement I have is the report's insistence, despite a call in the report itself for combat troops to be out by early 2008, that timelines and deadlines are not helpful. I believe that a firm timeline for our troops to come home is critical to get Iraqi leaders to make the political compromises necessary to achieve national reconciliation and stability. The U.S. has constantly imposed timelines on the political side -- for writing the constitution, for elections, and for forming a government. It was those timelines that got the Iraqis to resolve differences. We need to do something similar on the military side.

“I intend to continue to work aggressively with Representative Jack Murtha and other like-minded members of Congress to bring our troops home from Iraq sooner rather than later. I believe the bulk of our troops should be brought home sooner than early 2008.”