

**Washington, D.C.** - *U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today issued a statement on the testimony of General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker before Senate committee hearings on the war in Iraq.*

"Today's testimony from General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker provides little hope to Americans who want our government to end the War in Iraq soon. It is now clear that the Bush Administration intends to maintain 140,000 troops in Iraq for an indefinite period after the surge troops have been withdrawn this summer. However, it is not clear how our tremendous, ongoing commitment of U.S. lives and treasure is serving our strategic interests.

"As it stands, there is no indication that the tactical gains of the surge have been translated into lasting, strategic gains. The Administration's stated purpose in escalating U.S. troop levels last year was to reduce violence so that Iraq's leaders could reach the political accommodation necessary to govern themselves independently. Yet we have seen no real measurable progress in this area. If the escalation had served its purpose, we would be discussing a further drawdown of troops, but the Administration has determined that such a drawdown cannot be carried out.

"In the absence of political progress, we risk institutionalizing an indefinite dependency on the U.S. military to maintain security. The United States must send a clear signal to Iraq's political leaders that our occupation is coming to an end, forcing them to make the compromises necessary to govern and secure their own country. We must adopt an exit strategy, in consultation with the government of Iraq, which sets a timetable for withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq.

"In order to address the overarching strategic objective in Iraq, we must simultaneously initiate a surge of diplomacy to spur political progress and reconciliation within Iraq, engage Iraq's neighbors in working for stability in Iraq, and solicit more involvement by the international community. My legislation, H.R. 3797, would mandate such a diplomatic surge, and it enjoys strong bipartisan support.

"The only way to make the surge strategy successful is to take advantage of the reduction in violence to pressure the Iraqi government to make clear political progress and to accelerate the assumption by Iraqis of responsibility for their own defense. Otherwise, we will have committed

## PRICE STATEMENT ON THE WAY FORWARD IN IRAQ

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as grave and momentous a strategic failure as the decision to invade itself."

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