

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4904

January 26, 2005

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In light of the recent formation of the new Iraqi government and ongoing violence in Iraq, I am writing to re-emphasize how important it is to the American public, to our servicemen and women, and to the success of their mission that you lay out a clear strategy for U.S. military engagement in Iraq. As I suggested in my letter to you on November 22, 2005, you have an opportunity to put forth such a strategy during your State of the Union address. This strategy should contain a series of specific objectives and benchmarks that are tied to a public, flexible timetable for meeting those benchmarks, completing our military mission, and redeploying our troops. Unfortunately, your "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq" fails to do this, as have your recent speeches on this issue.

While you will undoubtedly have a wide range of issues to discuss during your State of the Union address, it is important that you outline a strategy to complete our military mission in Iraq and strengthen our national security by refocusing our efforts on defeating the global terrorist organizations that seek to harm us. Our military and intelligence capabilities are becoming increasingly strained as a result of your current, stay-the-course strategy, and an increasing number of members of Congress, military and intelligence experts, and members of the public have noted that our ongoing operations in Iraq are reducing our capabilities to fight terrorism around the world.

The American people want to continue to support our servicemen and women currently deployed in Iraq, and they have grown impatient with a meandering policy in Iraq that has no end date, no strategy for completing the mission, and no clear link to the broader war on terrorist organizations globally. Focusing exclusively on Iraq, at great cost to our military and taxpayers, will not help us defeat the global terrorist networks that exist in over 60 countries globally. What we need is a global, integrated, and aggressive strategy that utilizes all facets of American power and strength against a diffuse, determined, and elusive enemy.

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Mr. President, we need a strategy that recognizes that open-ended operations in Iraq are not serving our national security interests. I again urge you to use the State of Union address as an opportunity to lay out a new, global strategy to win the war on terror and to make our country safer. This requires a dramatic change in course in Iraq that will ultimately deliver a true strategic victory that will benefit our country.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Russell D. Feingold". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" and "F".

Russell D. Feingold
U.S. Senator