

Aides to the president said Mr. Obama approved his withdrawal plan at a meeting with his national security team Wednesday and would tell an audience of several thousand Marines and their families at Camp Lejeune, N.C., on Friday that he is bringing the current phase of the war to a close in August 2010.

“The combat, current combat mission in Iraq will end on August 31, 2010,” a senior administration official told reporters at a briefing under ground rules that he not be identified to avoid upstaging the president’s announcement. “At that point, the U.S. forces remaining in Iraq will undertake a new mission, a more limited mission.”

Mr. Obama agreed to give commanders 19 months to withdraw all combat brigades, 3 months longer than he promised on the campaign trail, to guard against any resurgence of violence. The bulk of the forces will remain in place until nearly next year to allow commanders to keep as many forces as possible through parliamentary elections in December.

After August 2010, the Obama plan will leave behind 35,000 to 50,000 of the 142,000 American troops now in Iraq to advise and train Iraqi security forces, conduct discrete counterterrorism missions and protect American civilian and military personnel working in the country, including State Department reconstruction teams.

The residual troops, which the Obama administration is calling a “transition force,” will remain only through December 2011, when a strategic agreement negotiated by President George W. Bush before he left office mandates the withdrawal of all American troops.

While the Bush team once envisioned a long-term military presence in Iraq long after violence subsides, akin to the deployment of tens of thousands of American forces in Germany or South Korea for decades after wars there, the Obama team said it plans to stick to the complete withdrawal by the end of 2011.

“The path we’re on here, the path is not towards any sort of a Korea model,” said the senior administration official. “The path is towards reducing, in a fairly substantial way, U. S. forces in 2010 and then down to what’s currently anticipated, down to zero, by the end of 2011.”

Officials said the plan has the support of all of Mr. Obama’s national security team, including Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both holdovers from the Bush administration. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the Middle East commander, and Gen. Ray Odierno, the Iraq commander, who were the main architects of Mr. Bush’s “surge” strategy credited with turning Iraq around, are also comfortable with the plan, officials said.

But leading Democrats are not. Even before the briefing at the White House on Thursday evening, Democrats criticized the size of the residual force, even though Mr. Obama said consistently during last year’s campaign that he would leave troops behind for limited missions.