

# THE HILL



## **Dems, liberal groups maneuver as Pelosi weighs options on war**

By Mike Soraghan  
September 13, 2007

Democratic lawmakers and liberal interest groups are jockeying for advantage as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) ponders the next step in her effort to change the direction of the Iraq war — there's no clear floor strategy on Iraq for House Democrats now that commanding Gen. David Petraeus has finished his testimony.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) and Rep. John Tanner (D-Tenn.) have discussed meeting with moderate Republicans to discuss ideas on Iraq.

But the netroots that form a key portion of Democrats' political base are wary of the kind of bills that Republicans and centrist Democrats will support.

The platform for Tanner's efforts to bring Democrats and Republicans together has been a bill he authored with Rep. Neil Abercrombie (D-Hawaii). It would order the president to provide "a report on the status of planning" for withdrawal from Iraq, but would not require him to implement it.

That has drawn intense opposition from the leaders of the Out of Iraq caucus, and now the netroots is getting involved, too. Barb Morrill, a contributing editor to the DailyKos website, has dubbed supporters of the bill "the Capitulation Caucus" and is urging people to call the offices of members believed to be supporting the bill.

"There comes a time when you can't just say you vote for good bills. You have to be willing to vote no on bad bills," Morrill, who posts as BarbinMD, said in an interview. "This can be extended to any bill that does not have any teeth in it."

Members who have been targeted in the post as "capitulators" are not reporting heavy traffic, but some say they've gotten a smattering of calls. Morrill said she had been contacted by several members seeking to "clarify" their positions. Some clarification may be needed. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), who fought the bill vehemently when it came onto the radar screen in late July, was listed as "undecided" on the post.

The bill got nearly unanimous support when the House Armed Services Committee approved it in July, but Lee and other Out of Iraq leaders, along with Morrill, say that it would provide "cover" to Republicans who want to say they've supported withdrawal.

The campaign against the bill comes as tensions rise between the centrist and liberal wings of the caucus. Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) recently told activists they should go after Democrats in primaries if they aren't sufficiently anti-war.

Leadership aides stress that no decisions have been made about what steps to take next as political leaders wait for President Bush's remarks on war strategy Thursday night.

“The speaker continues to meet with leadership and members,” Pelosi spokesman Nadeam Elshami said. “Democrats waited patiently for General Petraeus’s testimony. What he presented was a 10-year plan for Iraq.”

Smaller details began to emerge Wednesday, however.

Aides said there may be a floor vote next week on “war profiteering” legislation. The bill would likely be handled on the fast-track “suspension calendar.” It would clarify that any corruption surrounding U.S. funding in Iraq could be prosecuted in U.S. courts, even if it is allocated to something like the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Also, members of the Out of Iraq caucus have added to the roughly 70 House members who have pledged not to vote for more money for the war unless it pays for withdrawal. Their position was laid out in a letter to President Bush, and they are now seeking more signers.