

NCC supports report urging new Iraq policy: Applauds recommendation for phased withdrawal

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The National Council of Churches has applauded recommendations of a bipartisan panel that has called for a phased withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq. The panel also concluded that the Iraq policy of President Bush's administration is not working.

"While no set of recommendations can right all of the wrongs evolving from the Iraq war, this report does lay groundwork for an end to the war that all sides can find acceptable," the NCC said in its statement. "The president, as well as the newly elected Congress, needs to understand the opportunity presented by this report."

The statement from the NCC, issued December 6 shortly after the Iraq Study Group's recommendations were released, said the assessments "generally resonate" with what the ecumenical council has urged in recent months.

The bipartisan panel, labeling Iraq's security situation as "grave and deteriorating," called for a drawdown of U.S. forces as well as milestones for Iraqi national reconciliation, security and governance.

"While the NCC would have liked to have seen more specificity with regard to a timetable for withdrawal, the fact that the report redefines the mission of U.S. troops in such a way that makes room for their withdrawal by early 2008 is a step in the right direction," said the council's statement.