



**TODD AKIN, RANKING REPUBLICAN**  
**HOUSE ARMED SERVICES SUBCOMMITTEE ON**  
**OVERSIGHT & INVESTIGATIONS**

202-228-8980 ♦ [REPUBLICANS.ARMEDSERVICES.HOUSE.GOV](http://REPUBLICANS.ARMEDSERVICES.HOUSE.GOV)

For Immediate Release: July 31, 2007

Contact: Josh Holly; 202.226.3988

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Opening Statement of Congressman Todd Akin** *Oversight & Investigations Subcommittee Hearing on Alternatives for Iraq*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO), senior Republican on the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, today released the following opening statement for the subcommittee’s hearing on alternatives for Iraq:

“Today’s hearing is the last in a series aimed at breaking out of the false construct of talking about Iraq in terms constrained to ‘precipitous withdrawal’ or ‘stay the course.’ While these hearings have been helpful, I want to reiterate the purpose of this exercise: we are here to discuss alternatives that truly offer a different plan to the current strategy. Simply critiquing the current approach is not the point of this hearing and is not helpful. So, I look forward to hearing the witnesses discuss and define an alternative plan.

“After reviewing our witnesses’ testimonies, it is clear that some advocate departing from the current strategy – that is you do not endorse pursuing a plan that emphasizes U.S. combat forces going door to door performing a counterinsurgency mission aimed at securing and holding Iraqi neighborhoods. In light of increasing reports that the surge is succeeding, I would like our witnesses to comment on how we in the Congress should view these developments. In particular, Mr. O’Hanlon, I’m interested in understanding how the significant changes taking place in Iraq that you described in the *New York Times* yesterday affects your proposal for soft partition.

“Those who advocate departing from the current strategy emphasize the need for improving the readiness of the Army and Marine Corps. General McCaffrey’s testimony is heavily focused on this issue. While I think all members agree that this is an important issue and a vital priority, I’m curious how your alternative will allow U.S. troops to carry out the following military roles and missions: (1) training Iraqi forces; (2) deterring conventional militaries from intervening in Iraq; (3) supporting al Qaeda’s enemies; and (4) conducting direct strike missions? Almost all of the experts who have testified before this subcommittee on this subject agree that continuing these roles and missions in Iraq is important.

“Finally, according to previous witnesses, increased violence, humanitarian tragedy, a failed state, emboldened terrorists and regional actors will all result in the wake of the withdrawal or significant drawdown of American forces. I’d like to know how our witnesses will ensure that their plan will not to make the situation worse. For those concerned about readiness, how will we ensure that subsequent to withdrawal the U.S. will not find itself in a situation where U.S. forces will have to return to Iraq in five or ten

years? I would also appreciate it if you would take some time this morning to discuss how the U.S. should manage the consequences of withdrawal.

“Again, thank you for being here today.”

###

<http://Republicans.ArmedServices.House.Gov/>