

News From _____

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BYRD RESPONDS TO BUSH ON IRAN, APPROPRIATIONS

Washington, DC... U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd, D.W.Va, responded to President Bush's comments earlier today on Iran and the Fiscal Year 2008 Appropriations process.

Senator Byrd's Comments are below:

Iran

"The White House would be wise to seriously reexamine both the tempo and tone of its belligerent rhetoric, particularly in light of reports of a National Intelligence Estimate assessment that Iran's nuclear program was halted several years ago in response to international pressure. It now appears that the Bush administration was either unaware of this assessment by its own intelligence analysts, or that it continued to escalate its bellicose challenges against Iran in spite of it. Both possibilities are deeply troubling. It would be a tragedy for the entire world if the Administration's threats were used by Iran as a pretext to justify reestablishing its nuclear weapons program.

"This Administration's continued fondness for chest-pounding and saber-rattling instead of sound intelligence and strong diplomacy does not serve our nation well. The information contained in the NIE provides further evidence that diplomacy has worked in the past, and is the best strategy to pursue with Iran going forward."

Appropriations

"The President's continued refusal to negotiate in good faith with Congress on funding our nation's priorities is not only arrogant, it is deeply irresponsible. A man who once billed himself as a "uniter, not a divider" has diminished the office he holds with a petty "my way or the highway" attitude. This tyranny by veto threat is harmful to our nation. It is time for the White House to stop the political posturing and work with the Congress to take care of the peoples' urgent business."

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