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Reid says war is 'lost,' drawing GOP rebuke

The Boston Globe

By Anne Flaherty, Associated Press | April 20, 2007

WASHINGTON — Senate majority leader Harry Reid said yesterday that the war in Iraq is “lost,” triggering an angry backlash from Republicans who said the top Democrat had turned his back on the troops.

The bleak assessment, the sharpest yet from Reid, came as the House voted 215 to 199 to uphold legislation ordering troops out of Iraq next year. Reid said he told Bush on Wednesday that he thought the war could not be won through military force, but only through political, economic, and diplomatic means.

“I believe myself that the secretary of state, secretary of defense, and — you have to make your own decisions as to what the president knows — [know] this war is lost and the surge is not accomplishing anything as indicated by the extreme violence in Iraq yesterday,” said Reid, a Nevada Democrat.

Republicans pounced on the comment as evidence, they said, that Democrats do not support the troops.

“I can’t begin to imagine how our troops in the field, who are risking their lives every day, are going to react when they get back to base and hear that the Democrat leader of the United States Senate has declared the war is lost,” said Senate GOP leader Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky.

Last month, the House passed legislation that funded the war in Iraq but ordered combat missions to end by September 2008. The Senate passed similar legislation that would set a nonbinding goal of bringing combat troops home by March 31, 2008.

Bush said he would veto either measure, and warned that troops are being harmed by Congress’s failure to deliver the funds quickly.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon says it has enough money to pay for the Iraq war through June. The Army is taking “prudent measures” to slow the purchase of nonessential supplies and restrict other elective spending while still maintaining troop readiness, according to instructions sent to Army commanders and budget officials April 14.

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The accounting moves are similar to those enacted last year when the Republican-led Congress did not deliver a war funding bill to Bush until mid-June. ■

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