

US Senate okays \$70 billion for war in Iraq, Afghanistan

AFP, Washington

The US Senate late Tuesday approved a half-trillion dollar budget bill for 2008 that includes 70 billion dollars for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, handing a major victory to President George W. Bush.

The Senate voted 70-25 to approve the catch-all budget bill but added extra war funds after the House of Representatives version passed Monday included 31 billion dollars for US-led efforts in Afghanistan but none for Iraq.

The version passed by the Senate does not include any of the restrictions that Democrats hoped

to pin on the release of war funds, such as linking them to a withdrawal date for US troops.

The bill returns to the House for a vote on Wednesday, though lawmakers are only to vote on the war funding portion added by the Senate. If it passes, Bush has indicated he will sign the spending package.

Amid deep differences with the Congress over the Iraq war, the White House had threatened to veto the entire spending bill if it contained no funding for Iraq.

"Obviously, the full funding that we requested since February is what the troops need -- not just what they want, but what they

need. But this will help us get through this period," said Bush spokeswoman Dana Perino.

Democrats, who took over the US Congress in November 2006 elections fueled by anger at the war in Iraq, have tried without success to use their power of the purse to impose a timetable for withdrawal from the strife-torn country where nearly 4,000 US troops have died since the March 2003 invasion.

Democrats reportedly also gave up several billion dollars' worth of other budget demands rejected by Bush, in order to see the spending measure passed before the year-end recess. They have also been concerned about

being seen as unsupportive of US troops in battle at Christmas.

Democratic House majority leader Steny Hoyer told CNN that the House initially passed the \$1 billion dollars in funding for Afghanistan "so that we could confront terrorism and defeat the Taliban which was, after all, the site from which this country was attacked and which, frankly, we have distracted our attention from."

The package, known as the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008, includes 11 of 12 annual appropriations bills, leaving out defense which has already been approved by lawmakers.

Bomb kills 2 in southwest Pakistan

AFP, Quetta, Pakistan

A remote-controlled bomb exploded in Pakistan's restive southwest province of Baluchistan yesterday, killing two pro-government tribesmen, security officials said.

The bomb went off when family members of an influential tribal leader, Tariq Masoori, were traveling by car in the area of Dera Bugti, they said.

"Two people died and four were wounded, including Masoori's father," a security official said, requesting anonymity.

Baluchistan has been in the grip of a three-year rebellion launched by ethnic Baluch rebels who want more political rights and a greater share of profits from the desert region's natural resources.



PHOTO: AFP

A Muslim pilgrim gets his head shaved while others wait for their turn after casting pebbles at the column symbolizing the devil in Mina near the holy city of Makkah yesterday.

Iraq says Turkish raid an 'attack on sovereignty'

AFP, Baghdad

Iraq said yesterday it believed Turkey was unlikely to extend a military operation against Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq but sharply criticised Ankara for what it branded an attack on its sovereignty.

Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh urged Ankara to end the military action -- which comes after weeks of mounting cross-border tensions -- and use dialogue to solve the rebel issue.

"We believe Turkey is not going to extend the operation. It is a limited operation," Dabbagh said.

Turkey's military said the incursion had dealt a "heavy blow" to the rebels.

"A small-scale operation conducted by ground troops... dealt a heavy blow" to PKK militants who had tried to infiltrate Turkey overnight, it said on its website on Tuesday.

Around 500 Turkish troops crossed into northern Iraq on Tuesday targeting rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) guerrillas hiding in the mountainous terrain

along the border with Turkey.

The ground incursion was the first such operation since tensions between the two neighbours broke out after the rebels ambushed a Turkish military patrol on October 21 and killed 12 soldiers.

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Iraqi Kurdish officials from northern Iraq had said on Tuesday evening that Ankara had started withdrawing the troops.

But Dabbagh said he did not

Israel mulls new east Jerusalem settlement

AFP, Jerusalem

Israel said yesterday it was examining a plan to construct a new Jewish neighbourhood in occupied east Jerusalem, weeks after sparking world criticism for expanding another settlement in the city.

"This is a preliminary examination of an initial construction plan. Such feasibility checks are done all year round on all areas with building potential in Jerusalem,"

Housing Minister Zeev Boim said in a statement.

The statement was issued in response to a report in the Haaretz daily that said the minister had approved a construction plan in the neighbourhood of Atarot.

Two weeks ago, Israel invited bids for more than 300 new housing units in another neighbourhood of occupied and annexed east Jerusalem, known as Har Homa to Israelis and as Jebel Abu Ghneim to Palestinians.

The expansion came a week after Israelis and Palestinians revived peace talks at a conference in the US city of Annapolis and sparked criticism from Palestinians, the United States and the European Union.

At the conference, both Israel and Palestinians pledged to abide by the 2003 international roadmap peace blueprint, the first phase of which calls on Israel to halt settlement activity and on Palestinians to improve security.

Directorate General Defence Purchase

Ministry of Defence

New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Tender Notice

1. Sealed tenders in foreign currency are invited from bonafide manufacturers/suppliers (enlisted firms in DGDP) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh Armed Forces:

Ser No	Nomenclature	Date of selling		Currency	Tender No
		From	To		
1	Skimmed Milk Powder 200 Metric Tons	26-12-2007	15-1-2008	Foreign	888/P-8
2	Tender schedule with detail specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per IT selling rate (non-refundable) during office time between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hours and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of all tenderer (if present).				
	ISPR/Misc/07/1842 GD-4569				
	Maj For Director General				

Ser No.	Nomenclature	Date of selling		Date of opening	Currency	Tender No.
		From	To			
1.	Aeroshell Oil W-120 (Type-11(B)) or SAE-60 (100 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
2.	Aeroshell Turbine Oil 555 (50 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
3.	STD 2360 Turbu Oil-2380 (50 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8

AERO LUBRICANTS (NON SHELL PRODUCTS)						
1.	Mobil 28 (1lbs can) Grease (20 lbs)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
2.	Class B2 Sealing Compound (02 set)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
3.	WD-40 (50 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
4.	Grade 1 Corrosion Preventive Compound (02 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
5.	Grade 2 Corrosion Preventive Compound (02 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
6.	Type 1 Cleaner Detergent Compound (10 ltr)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8
7.	Powder Graphite (04 can)	26-12-2007	05-2-2008	06-2-2008	Foreign	996/P-8

2. Tender schedules with detail specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per IT selling rate (non-refundable) between 0800 hours to 1200 hours at DGDP office on all working days. Sealed tenders to be dropped in the tender box placed at DGDP latest by 1000 hours will be opened at 1005 hours on the same day in presence of the tenderers (if any).

ISPR/Misc/07/1828
GD-4517

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For Director General

Conservative Lee wins ROK presidency by landslide

Exit polls show

AFP, Seoul

A former tycoon who promises to reinvigorate South Korea's economy and take a tougher line with North Korea won a landslide presidential election victory yesterday, according to exit polls and partial official results.

Rightwing independent Lee Hoi-Chang was third with between 13 and 14 percent. He conceded defeat and congratulated his namesake.

With 26 percent of the vote tallied, official results gave Lee 46.5 percent to Chung's 28 percent and Lee Hoi-Chang's 15.8 percent.

Koreans grappling with high youth unemployment, an ever-widening income gap and soaring property prices gave Lee an unprecedented mandate even though he faces a fraud investigation.



PHOTO: AFP

Supporters of Grand National Party (GNP) presidential candidate Lee Myung-Bak celebrate around outside the party's headquarters in Seoul yesterday. Former tycoon Lee Myung-Bak, who promises to reinvigorate South Korea's economy and take a tougher line with North Korea, won a landslide presidential election victory, according to exit polls and partial official results.

GD-4621