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## IRAQ IN TRANSITION

## Iraq Costs Fuel Anti-Pentagon Backlash

As Rosy Projections Wilt, Military Leaders Face More Harsh Questions on Capitol Hill

By DAVID ROGERS

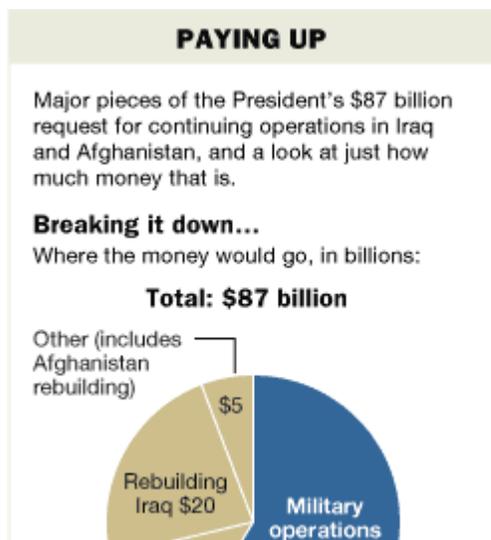
Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Congress seems certain to approve most of President Bush's emergency-funding request for Iraq and Afghanistan, but the \$87 billion price tag and the high U.S. troop commitments through next year are fueling a backlash against the Pentagon's top command.

Budget documents indicate an estimated 110,000 American troops would still be needed in Iraq at this time next year, only a modest reduction from the current 140,000 level, and far higher than the 30,000 the administration once predicted by the end of this year.

To help meet this commitment, the number of mobilized reserves at home and overseas will have to be maintained at the current level of about 174,000 through September 2004.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz faces a growing fury among Democrats and some conservatives at the optimistic projections he gave lawmakers just months ago. Rep. John Murtha (D., Pa.), a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and strong ally of Mr. Bush's father in the Gulf War, said flatly, "Wolfowitz is gone." But a defense official close to the secretary said the uproar "is really more accurately an indication of the political season we have entered."



Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Richard Lugar (R., Ind.) refused to be drawn into the fray, but said he talked with Mr. Bush last week about rethinking the U.S. approach to nation-building in Iraq -- and the control the Pentagon enjoys.

"For better or worse it has landed in the Defense Department," Mr. Lugar said of the troubled reconstruction efforts. "I suspect that is not appropriate in the long run for the success and efficacy of the program."

The request breaks into two primary sections: \$65.5 billion for military and intelligence activities and more than \$21.4 billion for chiefly reconstruction work in Iraq and Afghanistan.

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## IRAQ IN TRANSITION



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In the case of Iraq, Republicans admit there is "sticker shock" among conservatives, who had thought the nation's oil revenue would cover many of these costs. Just months ago, administration witnesses had testified about the relative strength of the very Iraq infrastructure that now requires billions to rebuild.

In contrast with the limited review of the first supplemental spending request for the war last spring, lawmakers plan to ask more questions. "The administration is going to have to explain in great detail why they want the money, where it's going, ... what are the contingency plans if we don't get significant troop support from other countries," said Sen. Chuck Hagel (R., Neb.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Troop operations costs in Iraq averaged near \$4.5 billion a month in July and August, and the Army and Air Force account for the bulk of the new funding. But an estimated \$6.3 billion is budgeted for classified activities and intelligence, including the Central Intelligence Agency.

Procurement accounts for a relatively small share, just \$1.9 billion, including the purchase of 595 heavy mobile Army vehicles, kevlar body armor and electronic jammers to block terrorists from using cellular phones to trigger bombs near troops.

Pakistan is expected to receive a major share of the \$1.4 billion budgeted to support coalition forces in the larger war against terrorism. Within Iraq itself, \$800 million is budgeted to cover the cost of transporting and supporting two multinational divisions that could replace or complement the U.S. presence.

Anticipating a long stay for troops, the budget also revives a Vietnam War fixture: the rest and recreation budget. Troops would be promised two weeks of leave a year at designated recreation spots such as Dubai or on the Mediterranean.

Iraq accounts for the lion's share -- about \$20.3 billion -- of the rebuilding funds, while Afghanistan would receive about \$1.2 billion altogether.

About \$5 billion of the Iraq funds would go to beef up security, including \$2.1 billion to establish national security forces and an Iraq Civil Defense Corps. Within the estimated \$15 billion for major rebuilding priorities, \$6 billion is budgeted for electric power infrastructure and \$2.1 billion to rehabilitate worn oil-industry equipment. An additional \$3.7 billion would be dedicated to improve water and sewer services, and about \$900 million to construct, repair and equip hospitals and medical clinics.

Albeit much smaller, Afghanistan's \$1.2 billion -- which would include about \$393 million from unspent defense funds -- would go to many of the same priorities. An estimated \$222 million would go to train and equip troops for a 10,000-strong Afghan National Army, \$105 million for the ongoing construction of the Kandahar-Herat road, and \$70 million for schools and medical clinics.

The White House, which began more detailed briefings at the Capitol Monday, said it expects its formal budget request won't be available for another week to 10 days. House Appropriations Committee Chairman Bill Young (R., Fla.) promised to expedite action then, but the timing certainly complicates the annual budget process, as lawmakers scramble to meet year-end deadlines before fiscal 2004 begins Oct. 1.

The chances are increased that domestic-spending bills will have to be put together into massive packages, and the billions for commitments overseas will be juxtaposed with an otherwise tight domestic budget and tough economic times.

"You're asking us to pony up \$87 billion and at the same time you're fighting tooth and nail over money for Head Start," said Rep. George Miller (D., Calif.). "Is he [President Bush] going to the United Nations to soften up Congress or is going to the U.N. to engage them?"

Lawmakers will be reluctant to cut any military money, but going into the 2004 elections, Democrats could force Republicans to vote on individual items in the Iraq rebuilding budget, at a time when voters are worried about the electric grid at home, for example, after outages in August.

And much as he is committed to giving Mr. Bush the required resources, Rep. David Obey (D., Wis.) warned of the consequences.

"For constituents, foreign aid is the grace note you're allowed to indulge in if you are meeting their meat and potatoes requirements back home," said Mr. Obey, the ranking Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee and a veteran of many foreign-aid fights. "That's how we were able to do the Marshall Plan -- they figured Harry Truman was taking care of the home front as well as Europe. Here, they see everything collapsing around them in the economy."

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