

Both Sen. Ben Nelson and Rep. Lee Terry saw reasons to support their opposite votes on war legislation after briefings Saturday in Baghdad .

Although he does not support a timeline for withdrawal of troops, Nelson said its inclusion in the war supplemental appropriations bill he supported sent an important message to Iraqi officials that has been heard.

Terry, who voted against the measure, said he was even more convinced after talking with Iraqi leaders that more time may be needed for military presence to allow the Iraqis to succeed.

Both men spoke by telephone from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad at the end of an 18-hour day of meetings with Iraqi and officials, including Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker.

Nelson and Terry will travel to three places outside Baghdad today to visit with troops.

"In each and every meeting, I indicated the American people are growing very weary of the war effort," Nelson said.

That's why a nonbinding goal of withdrawing most soldiers by April 1 was included in the war appropriations bill, along with a provision requiring phased withdrawal to begin later this year, the Democratic senator said.

Those dates will be removed after President Bush vetoes the bill, Nelson said. But the benchmarks he has championed to measure progress toward required goals need to be retained in the next version of the measure, he said.

"The benchmarks are a condition for staying," Nelson said. "Prime Minister al-Maliki made it very clear he understands those concerns and he is committed to showing results."

Iraqi officials understand "time is ticking," Nelson said, because the military commitment is not open-ended.

Terry said he heard a consistent theme from Iraqi leaders throughout the day: "You can't leave now, and we need more time."

One Iraqi official said withdrawal now could mean would be taken over by al-Qaida and , the 2nd District Republican congressman said.

"We made it very clear is growing weary of this and we need to see progress on security and the development of your government," Terry said. "They made it clear they understand what is feeling."

Terry, making his first trip to , said his initial impressions were opposite of what he expected.

"I came here thinking the big issue was security (and) that this government was competent and moving forward," he said.

However, Terry said, he ended the day believing progress has been made in establishing security, but the government is "more dysfunctional than I had thought."

Now, he said, "I feel less confident in their government. They can't figure out how to share power."

Terry said he reserves the right to change his initial impression about improved security after he talks with soldiers in the field today.

Accompanying Nelson and Terry on the weekend trip are Sen. Jeff Sessions, R-Ala., and Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif.

This is the third trip to for Nelson, who is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and chairman of its subcommittee on military personnel.

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