



Iraqi Lawmakers Not Making Progress On Oil Bill

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Baghdad (AHN) -- One of the sticking points on withdrawing U.S. troops from Iraq is the government's unfinished business. On that list is how to structure Iraq's oil industry and divide the nation's oil riches among all its citizens, be they Sunni, Shiite or Kurd. At issue too is what role international companies will have in sharing in Iraq's oil riches.

Iraq's progress toward resolving the issue in a timely fashion versus resolving the issue by a specified date is on the Democratic-led Congress's agenda for continued funding of the Iraq War. That is also one of the issues that the Iraqi government must resolve before it can become independent and provide its own security instead of relying on U.S. troops.

Pres. George W. Bush has pointed out how important an oil law is to unifying Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds behind Iraq's government.

Much of the problem in passing an oil law has been that instead of focusing on sharing oil revenue among Iraq's groups, the proposed laws have focused on setting up a framework for investment by foreign companies. Although letting foreign companies so deeply into Iraq's oil industry would not be beneficial over the long term, over the short term Iraq needs lacks the needed capital to develop its oil industry, analysts say.

Iraqi lawmakers say that whether it takes them into the Fall to create a law on the oil industry that they don't want to be rushed because it will go to the heart of Iraq's identity, the Christian Science Monitor reported Friday.

The bill that Iraq's lawmakers have drafted so far has not even made it to parliament for discussion. Critics say it shouldn't because it is not complete. For one thing, it doesn't resolve the key issues of how to divide oil revenue or how much investment by foreign oil companies will be allowed.

By Linda Young

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