

Statement of U.S. Senator Russ Feingold

On the Nomination of General David Petraeus to be CENTCOM Commander

"During his testimony before Congress, General Petraeus stated that since his focus has been on Iraq, he was unable to comment on why the threat from al Qaeda has increased, specifically in Afghanistan and Pakistan. As CENTCOM Commander, General Petraeus will be responsible for assessing the entire region, including the impact our presence in Iraq is having on our ability to combat al Qaeda and its affiliates throughout that region. The truth is our perceived occupation of Iraq is destabilizing the region while the administration's myopic focus on Iraq has overlooked the rising threat of al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan. General Petraeus's predecessor, Admiral Fallon, understood the need for a comprehensive strategy for the Middle East which extended beyond Iraq. As he begins the confirmation process to become the next commander of CENTCOM, General Petraeus must answer the most important question we face, which is not whether we are winning in Iraq, but why we are not defeating al Qaeda."