

Allard, Salazar look to Bush for Iraq progress outline

By **BILL THEOBALD**

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — U.S. forces become bogged down in a war where even defining victory seems difficult and support at home wanes.

That was Vietnam. But Rep. Marilyn Musgrave fears Democrats are succeeding in characterizing the Iraq War in the same terms.

"I feel like the liberals are trying to make this another Vietnam," Musgrave, a Republican, said in advance of today's speech by President Bush updating the nation on the situation in Iraq. "I think it's going to take strength of character to stay

Musgrave fears Dems successful in putting Iraq in Vietnam terms

there and finish the job."

Colorado Sens. Wayne Allard, a Republican, and Ken Salazar, a



ALLARD

Democrat, said they are both looking to the president to reassure the nation and attempt to outline what progress has been made.

"With so much violence occurring in Iraq and the toll on U.S. soldiers and resources rising, it is becoming difficult for

my constituents to see the progress we are truly making," Allard said in a written statement.



MUSGRAVE

But to Musgrave and Allard, progress is clear.

"We are much closer to the end than what some people think we are," Musgrave said.

Said Allard: "I am highly encouraged by the political meta-

morphosis that has taken place there. Iraq is now ruled by Iraqis elected by the Iraqi people."



SALAZAR

But setting a deadline for withdrawal of American forces would be "almost laughable,"

she said.

"In any kind of conflict you are in, you do not give your enemy information about strategy," Musgrave said.

Allard agreed that a timetable is not a good idea.

Salazar, his spokesman said, will get updated on the Iraqi situation Tuesday in meetings with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, Gen. John Abizaid, who heads U.S. Central Command in the Middle East and intelligence personnel.

A CNN-USA Today-Gallup Poll released Monday showed

only 40 percent of Americans approve of President Bush's handling of the war in Iraq, while 58 percent disapprove. That matches the approval rating last month, which was the lowest since the start of the war.

Musgrave said she detects little change in the views of her constituents. They are realists who understand "what we are facing is very, very difficult."

At the same time, she acknowledges that the memories of Vietnam are registering with some.

"I think he has a big task ahead of him," she said of Bush. "I think his detractors have seized the moment here."

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House OKs Musgrave's Sand Creek legislation

The House of Representatives moved the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site closer to reality on Monday, approving legislation by Rep. Marilyn Musgrave, R-Fort Morgan.

Musgrave's bill, which still needs U.S. Senate approval, would place 1,465 acres at Dawson's Ranch in Kiowa County into a trust managed by the National Park Service. The land surrounds a site owned by the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes where more than 150 Cheyenne and Arapaho men, women and children were killed by U.S. troops on Nov. 29, 1864.

By placing the adjacent land into trust, it would be able to be used only for historic, religious or cultural uses compatible with the historic site.