

[By Bob Kinzel](#)

(Host) Congressman Peter Welch says the time has come for the United States to withdraw virtually all of its troops from Afghanistan because President Obama's policy of "nation building" has been a failure.

And, as VPR's Bob Kinzel reports, Welch is teaming up with one of the most conservative members of Congress to restrict funding for the war in Afghanistan.

(Kinzel) Welch's primary ally in the effort to change U.S. policy in Afghanistan is Republican Rep. Jason Chaffetz of Utah.

Chaffetz has a reputation as being one of the most fiscally conservative members of the U.S. House and he also enjoys strong support from the Tea Party movement in Utah.

Welch and Chaffetz are sponsoring an amendment this week to a Defense Department budget bill that calls for the withdrawal of most of the 100,000 U.S. soldiers currently serving in Afghanistan.

Welch says it's a case where members on opposite sides of the political spectrum are coming together to alter U.S. foreign policy.

(Welch) "My view - and I think it's the Vermont approach - is work with people on things where you can work with them, and I see there being a real opportunity if we do this on a bipartisan basis to make this call for a change away from nation building."

(Kinzel) Instead of pursuing a policy of nation building, Welch thinks a counter terrorism policy can be much more effective in protecting national security.

(Welch) "What we saw with the success of the killing of Osama bin Laden was that a decentralized and dispersed response worked-namely, basing it on intelligence and then special forces operation. And you add to the mix that the Karzai government is utterly corrupt and not a reliable partner. I think the time has come to re-examine this strategy of nation building."

(Kinzel) Welch has a second amendment that would require a president to obtain Congressional approval before launching any major military operation.

(Welch) "If we've learned anything it's that once you did commit troops then it's very, very difficult to revise that policy even when the evidence suggests that you should my other view is that this question of military force is so profoundly important that under our separating of powers Congress should vote yes or no on a clear up or down vote...so that every single member of Congress is held accountable by his and her voters."

(Kinzel) Members of the House Rules committee will decide on Tuesday afternoon if Welch's amendments will be part of the House debate on the Defense Department budget bill. Welch says he's optimistic that the panel will allow his amendments to be considered.

For VPR News, I'm Bob Kinzel in Montpelier.