

Press Release

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SCHAKOWSKY SAYS REPUBLICAN MISTAKES AND LACK OF ACCOUNTABILITY ON IRAQ HAVE FAILED AMERICANS

Calls on Congress to pass Murtha resolution, redeploy American troops from Iraq

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a founding member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, today delivered the following statement of the floor of the House during debate on the H.Res. 861, the House Republicans' partisan resolution which would encourage the U.S. to stick to its failed strategy of staying the course in Iraq. Schakowsky highlighted Republican mistakes that misled the American public into war and the lack of accountability since the war has begun. She called on Congress to pass the Murtha resolution and to deploy American troops from Iraq.

Schakowsky's statement is below:

Mr. Speaker, as a founding member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, I rise in strong support of our brave troops, and in strong support of Congressman Murtha's plan for a responsible redeployment from Iraq.

Americans want the truth about the Iraq war. Americans deserve the truth, and despite all the talk from those who declared this war, so ineptly pursued this, and still today justify this war, the American people, in overwhelming numbers have determined for themselves the truth about this war. Reputable polls taken after the killing of Al-Zarqawi show that only 33 percent of American adults think that the result of the war was worth the loss of American life and other costs, only 33 percent approve of the way George W. Bush is handling the situation with Iraq and only 26 percent of Americans feel that the United States is better off because of the war.

The American people, in their wisdom, have been able to distinguish reality from rhetoric. The truth has been a major casualty of the war in Iraq. It is worth reviewing just a few of the statements presented as truth that were told over the last 4 years, some remarkably being said again today, that have been proven not be NOT TRUE, never true,

and still not true.

Dick Cheney said in August 2002: "Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction."

Secretary Rumsfeld said in March 2003: "We know where they are. They're in the area around Tikrit and Baghdad and east, west, south and north somewhat."

Then the President said in May 2003: "We found the weapons of mass destruction..[F]or those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong, we found them."

Then, Secretary Rumsfeld said: "Well, the Office of Management and Budget, has come up with a number that's something under \$50 billion for the cost. How much of that would be the U.S. burden, and how much would be other countries, is an open question."

And then, Dick Cheney said on May 30, 2005: "I think they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency."

And what happens to those experts who tell the truth? Are they heeded and embraced by the Bush Administration? Hardly!

Though it is now universally agreed that we didn't have enough troops to avoid the chaos and violence after the initial invasion, when the Army's top general, Eric Shinseki, testified in February 2003 that "something on the order of several hundred thousand soldiers" would be necessary to achieve victory in Iraq, he was immediately and publicly repudiated by Secretary Rumsfeld who said that "the idea that it would take several hundred thousand U.S. forces I think is far off the mark." Shinseki was quietly ushered into retirement, and Secretary Rumsfeld remains in place leading the failed Bush Administration policy in Iraq.

When Dr. Lawrence Lindsey, former assistant for economic policy to President Bush, told the Wall Street Journal in September 2002 that the war's cost could reach \$200 billion dollars, he was fired by the President. By everyone's estimation, we have spent well in excess \$450 billion in Iraq. Some say, considering all the costs including caring for the severely wounded, the war will cost \$1 trillion taxpayers dollars.

Since the time the President announced on May 1st, 2003, that "Major combat operations in Iraq have ended," more than 2,350 U.S. soldiers have lost their lives, and the President has not attended a single one of their funerals. And the United States is spending in excess of \$8 billion dollars a month to wage the war in Iraq. That means we are spending approximately \$266 million a day, \$11 million an hour, \$185,000 a minute, and \$3,100 a second for this war.

Certainly we could have afforded body armor and proper Humvees for our soldiers, we

could have insured 165 million children for one year, provided more than 13 million American students with 4-year scholarships at public universities, fully funded global anti-hunger efforts for 11 years, to give basic immunization to every child in the world 92 years. I believe that would have given us more security than the war in Iraq has done.

Our military men and women have done a magnificent job in the Iraq theater, and deserve better. The civilian leadership in the White House and the civilian leadership at the Pentagon have failed. They projected the cost of the war - wrong. They predicted the length of the war - wrong. They predicted the existence of weapons of mass destruction - wrong. They predicted the Iraqi reaction to our occupation - wrong. They got the reconstruction of Iraq - wrong. They performed their oversight responsibilities - wrong. They understood the need to provide properly up-armored Humvees and the need to provide appropriate body armor - wrong. Who will pay the price for their mistakes? None of the architects of this war. No one of them has been held accountable. The only ones paying the price are dead and wounded soldiers, our men and women in uniform.

We need a new direction in Iraq. The majority has nothing to offer in terms of a plan. Just more political ploys, more talk, more mistakes, like today's debate.

It is time to redeploy our troops from Iraq. There is a plan. The Murtha plan. We should ensure we are not establishing a permanent military presence in Iraq.