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SCHAKOWSKY, DEMOCRATS STAND UNITED WITH TROOPS, AGAINST REPUBLICAN POLITICAL STUNTS

WASHINGTON, DC - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky, a founding member of the Out-of-Iraq Caucus, today released the following statement on efforts by the Republican leadership to smear Congressman John Murtha and his effort to withdraw American troops from Iraq.

Representative Schakowsky's statement is below:

My colleagues, there is nothing - nothing - more serious that we will do in our lives as well as our careers than to send young American men and women to war. And there is no one in this body who understands the consequences of that decision more than Jack Murtha who served 37 years in the Marines, won two purple hearts in battle, and loves without reservation our soldiers in uniform.

Over 2,070 Americans and tens of thousands of civilian Iraqis are dead, thousands more are horribly injured in this war that many of us believe to be completely unjustified. Yet the House Republicans are so morally bankrupt that they would turn to cheap political stunts in order to undercut Congressman Murtha's conscience-driven call for an end to the Iraq war, which he calls "a flawed policy wrapped in illusion."

But there is not a person in this House who is man or woman enough to ever undercut the credibility of Jack Murtha, no matter how many accusations they may throw at him, no matter how many names they call him, and no matter how many "clever" tactics they try.

Shame on the Republican leaders for thinking it's ok to turn this war into a game and Rep. Murtha into a political football. Shame on the Speaker for accusing Jack Murtha of insulting and demoralizing our troops. Mr. Murtha, this decorated war hero, is right when he says "what demoralizes them is going to war with not enough troops and equipment to make the transition to peace; the devastation caused by IEDs; being deployed to Iraq when their homes have been ravaged by hurricanes; being on their second or third deployment and leaving their families behind without a network of support."

The Republicans don't demean Mr. Murtha, can't begin to demean Mr. Murtha, when they make baseless allegations and engage in pointless political stunts. They demean themselves and they demean the integrity of this House of Representatives. Shame on you.

I support Jack Murtha's resolution to stop sending our soldiers to die in Iraq. I support him when he says, "It is time to bring them home." The proper response from those who disagree with this revered Marine would be to have a serious discussion about how we got into Iraq, about the conduct of the war, and about how we get out. Instead we see the typical slash-and-burn personal attacks that are the mainstay of the Republicans, especially when they know they are wrong. And you are wrong.

But you are no longer fooling the American people. In overwhelming numbers they think it was a mistake to go to war in Iraq; they think the Bush Administration mishandled the war; they don't trust the President to tell the truth; and they don't support this war. On the eve of Thanksgiving, even as our troops are doing their very best far from home and family, the Republicans have chosen to pull a cheap, demeaning political stunt. Shame on you!