

MAY 5, 2004

SCHAKOWSKY: BUSH ADMINISTRATION MISSTATEMENT OF THE DAY - THE COST OF WAR IN IRAQ

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) issued "The Bush Administration Misstatement of the Day" on the cost of war in Iraq.

According to news reports today, the Bush administration "will ask Congress for an additional \$25 billion for U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Republican congressional aides said Wednesday, a change from the White House's earlier plans to not request such money until after the November elections."

(AP, 5/5/04)

However, "White House budget director Joshua Bolten said earlier this year that the administration will eventually need more money beyond the \$87 billion Congress authorized for this budget year, which ends Sept. 30. But Bolten said the administration would not request it this year, meaning such a multibillion-dollar appeal would come after the November election." (AP, 4/21/04)

Prior to the war in Iraq and during the early months of the conflict, Bush Administration officials refused to acknowledge that the war and reconstruction efforts would cost hundreds of billions of dollars.

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Official: Bush to Seek \$25B for Iraq War

By ALAN FRAM

Associated Press Writer

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WASHINGTON (AP) - The Bush administration will ask Congress for an additional \$25 billion for U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Republican congressional aides said Wednesday, a change from the White House's earlier plans to not request such money

until after the November elections.□

White House budget chief Joshua Bolten and Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz journeyed to the Capitol on Wednesday to present the proposal to House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., and other top Republicans.□

The request comes amid an intensified Iraqi insurrection that has inflicted steady casualties on Americans and forced the Pentagon to plan on keeping more troops in the country next year than the administration had previously planned.□

It also comes with the Bush administration and the military facing widespread criticism at home and abroad for the abuse of Iraqi war prisoners, including investigations into the deaths of 14 of the detainees.□

The \$25 billion request is for the federal budget year that begins next Oct. 1, the aides said. In recent weeks, administration officials have raised the possibility that they also will need extra money for the final weeks of this fiscal year as well, with many members of Congress saying they believe billions will be needed.□

Last February, President Bush's budget omitted any funds for U.S. military and reconstruction activities in Iraq and Afghanistan next year. Bolten said at the time that the administration's 2005 request for Iraq could be up to \$50 billion.□

It seemed likely that the \$25 billion proposal to be discussed on Wednesday would be only the first portion of funds that will be needed for next year.□

One camp in the White House has been agitating for weeks for a supplemental budget request, on two grounds. These officials have argued that neither Democrats nor Republicans in Congress would block such funds if the military made plain the money was needed for the troops; and that it was better to have a long fight over the money sooner, rather than later in the year -- and closer to the election.□

Congress and Bush enacted an \$87.5 billion package last November for this year's U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In April 2003, a \$79.5 billion measure was approved for that year's activities.