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A few questions for Rep. Inglis

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Rep. Bob Inglis (R-S.C.) from Travelers Rest voted Wednesday against the Iraq funding bill containing a deadline for withdrawal. Rep. Inglis shared a few thoughts on the evening of the House vote on the Iraq funding bill.

Q: At what age did you realize you were a Republican?

A: In high school. In 1976 I was Gerald Ford, and my friend Bennet Copeland was Jimmy Carter.

Q: Who is your favorite person in history?

A: John Adams, who I read about in David McCullough's biography. He was an impressive fellow - he had an outline of the Constitution in his head even before the Declaration of Independence was written.

Q: What is your favorite place in Washington to escape politics?

A: The House gym. It's the most pleasant place in Washington - there's quite a lot of friendship and camaraderie (there), across party lines.

Q: How do you balance the idea of representing the desires of your constituency with your conscience?

A: (I read) John F. Kennedy's Profiles in Courage - I think he had it right. A representative should represent his or her people, with two exceptions: if the representative has information not available to the people, for example secret information intercepted, related to war efforts. And two, as a matter of conscience. In both cases, you exercise your best judgment and explain (your reasoning) to the constituents.

Q: Which of those categories fits in looking at your decision to vote against the troop surge in March.?

A: It was a cross between those two. In part, it was a matter of information gathered in trips to the Middle East, as well as hearing the debate (and being) steeped in information. It was also a matter of

conscience, an obligation, as a civilian leader, to the military.

Q: Was the vote the most difficult political decision of your career?

A: Well, there was also the Confederate flag controversy (of 1995-96). That caused quite a stir.

Q: Have you had any positive response from the constituency about the (troop surge) vote?

A: Some, but not much.

Q: Who, in your opinion, is responsible for directing a war: the president, as commander-in-chief, or congress, which has power to declare war and control of the purse?

A: Both are indispensable parties, not just at the inception (of the war). There should be substantial deference by congress to the president as commander-in-chief. This president is very wise to leave (tactical decisions) to the military leaders. I think Gen. Petraeus is a straight-shooter who won't shade it, who will tell it like it is.

Q: What will it take for us to pull out of Iraq?

A: I'm hopeful that we can add another success to the two we've already had: we got rid of Saddam, and we interrupted the terrorist networks, preventing another attack in the U.S. Our goal should be to get Iraq to a reasonable level of stability. it's taken longer than we wanted it to take, but it's not too late.

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