

Ryan Prepared Opening Statement
Iraq Hearing
September 16, 2008

- Thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing on an issue of particular importance to this Committee. That is, how we budget for the war on terrorism, particularly the war in Iraq.
- But while *talking* about this is important – with only two weeks left before the funding for our troops expires -- it would be wise for this Congress to put a similar effort into *actually completing* the Defense Appropriations bill.
- A month or so ago, GAO estimated that Iraq will be generating significant oil revenues in 2008; and will be running a budget *surplus*. I am very interested to hear from Dr. Christoff on whether or not he believes that is *still* the case today, with the volatility in oil prices.
- Clearly, our success in Iraq depends largely on the establishment of the stable security environment that is necessary for a civil society and a growing economy in that nation.
- This report suggests that Iraq is making progress on getting its oil industry operating and developing a functioning government. I view this as progress.
- And I believe that progress is due largely to the fact that *the surge has worked*.
- American troops have made remarkable progress in improving ground conditions in Iraq. And -- *by most all accounts* -- it appears we have clearly turned a corner.
- I was among those who supported the surge, which I'll note Senator Obama recently stated he believes "has succeeded beyond our wildest dreams."
- And while I've certainly heard the arguments of those who insist that *now* is the right time to simply pull out – I will argue the opposite.

- Now is the time to take those incredibly hard-fought gains, build upon them, and finish the job.
- On a final note, if there is one thing I would ask my colleagues to keep in mind, it's that – regardless of which side of the aisle you're on – none of us *wants* to be at war. At the same time, *every one of us* wants to ensure the safety and security of our nation. In short, I believe we all genuinely want to do what is right and best for America.
- This hearing offers the Committee an opportunity to look forward: forward to how we budget for finishing the job in Iraq; forward to ensuring the security environment in Iraq continues to foster a growing economy; and forward to the day the Iraqi government has the capability to stand on its own two feet.
- I look forward to hearing from Mr. Christoff and our other witnesses – who I would like to thank for being here today.