

Representative Henry A. Waxman
Statement in Support of H.Con.Res. 63

February 16, 2007

This Administration has mishandled the situation in Iraq from the very beginning.

- It misled the country into war through false and misleading statements about the threat from Iraq.
- It failed to plan for the aftermath of the military victory. It assumed that we would be greeted as liberators, the occupation would be brief, and Iraq would pay for its own reconstruction.
- It sent our troops to battle with dangerous shortages in body armor and devices needed to defuse remote controlled bombs.
- It sent too few troops to Iraq to provide security, leaving the Iraqi people to rely on their sectarian militias to give them some protection from the chaos.
- It disbanded the Iraqi army and through an anti-Baathist campaign gave the Sunni elites a sense that the U.S. was aiding the Shiites against them.
- It refused to take on war profiteering even as auditors, investigators, and inspector generals unearthed massive graft, fraud, and abuse by reconstruction contractors.
- It alienated the Iraqi people with the shameful and criminal acts at Abu Ghraib prison.

What we now have in Iraq is a defeat of the illusions of the Bush Administration that we will be able to create a stable, unified, liberal democracy in Iraq that is pro-American. Instead we have sectarian fighting, death squads, and a destabilized Middle East that threatens to be engulfed by the nightmare we have unleashed.

The Administration's mistakes have weakened our fight against Al-Qaeda. In fact, the war has enhanced the group's terrorist recruitment. The planned escalation in Iraq will divert more troops, resources, and attention from the pursuit of Osama bin Laden's

operational base in Afghanistan. And, we have enhanced the influence of Iran, not just in Iraq, but throughout the region.

The President proposes an escalation of a failed policy. The fighting now only prolongs our losses and blocks the way to a new strategy. We are trying to mediate a civil war, which is impossible. We are being drawn into a civil war to prop up a “government” that, in the final analysis cannot unite the country.

Politically, the Administration has tied the fate of American soldiers to a Shia dominated government that lacks the authority, the will, and the manpower to stop the roving gangs and insurgent militias that have shattered Iraqi society.

Instead of acknowledging these failures and embarking on a new course of action, the President gives us more of the same: send more troops to Iraq.

We need to redefine our mission and our hopes for “success.” Our goal should be to shed our illusions and recognize that we must stabilize the situation. We cannot do it alone and we cannot do it militarily. We must seek a diplomatic strategy with Iraq’s neighbors and the international community.

Surely it will take more action than the resolution before us to bring about significant policy changes. This Congress must stand ready to use the checks and balances necessary to extract ourselves from the morass we face in Iraq.

It is time to stop repeating the same mistakes. It is time for Congress to use the appropriations process to alter the course of the war. It is time to end this war and bring our troops home. We owe it to them to pass this resolution and make clear to the President that we will not stand for more of the same.