

## September 12, 2006 Cleland Denounces War, Supports Murtha

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### CLELAND DENOUNCES WAR, SUPPORTS MURTHA

Atlanta, GA - Former U. S. Senator Max Cleland, D-GA, delivered his strongest denunciation to date of the Iraq War tonight, and declared his unwavering support for U.S. Rep John P. Murtha, D-PA, who is arguably the leading war critic in the Congress.

Cleland, a triple amputee veteran of the Viet Nam war, appearing on the "Countdown with Keith Olbermann Show" on MSNBC said, that Iraq is, "George Bush's Viet Nam." He predicted that, "History will look back on the invasion of Iraq after 9/11 as one of the greatest elements of folly in our history."

He added, " Five years later, Osama bin Laden and his terrorist cadre are still on the loose." He criticized government officials for being stupid in losing their focus on capturing and killing bin Laden.

"What we have here is a six year war that the President didn't tell us about. Notice that he has said he will leave the troops there in Iraq until he leaves office... He's leaving them twisting slowly, slowly in the wind. It's time to redeploy the forces from Iraq and bringing home our guard and reserve to guard our borders and focus on killing or capturing Osama bin Laden and his terrorist cadre.

"And when someone like Jack Murtha says that, what do they (the administration) do? Do they go after Osama bin Laden? No, they go after Jack Murtha. And they're trying to slime him in his own hometown of Johnstown PA," Cleland said.

In response to a question from Olbermann on what Murtha would do differently in the new Congress if Democrats win a majority and Murtha heads the Defense Appropriation sub-committee, Cleland said Murtha would do three things.

"First, he'd lead an effort that I think is growing in this nation and in the Congress and hopefully in the new Congress that we've had it in Iraq. And it's time for the Iraqi citizens to take charge of their own country. It's time to withdraw our force's out of harm's way and eliminate the possibility of the veterans that are getting killed and maimed there and adding to that number.

"Secondly, to focus our guard and reserve on our border.

"And third, to really focus on the military necessity and political necessity to put together our allies who we've dissed for five years and really focus on the center of terrorism in the world. And that's Osama bin Laden and his terrorist cadre. And kill or capture him and kill or capture them.

"That you can expect from Jack Murtha."

Cleland concluded, " It's time to withdraw our forces from there and leave Iraq to the Iraqis. And let's take care of our country first."