

## March 19, 2006 CBS Sunday Morning Murtha Commentary

For Immediate Release

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Washington D.C. - To say that the United States should stay in Iraq to avoid a full blown Civil War is a disservice to our troops. Our military has completed its mission in Iraq. I said over a year ago, and most including the Pentagon agree, Iraq cannot be won militarily. It's time to re-deploy our troops from Iraq.

Nearly a half a trillion dollars has been appropriated for this war. More than 30,000 Iraqis have lost their lives. Over 800 lives were lost in Iraq in January 2006. There have been nearly 20,000 U.S. casualties since the start of the war.

The Iraqis had their elections and they elected their parliament. Now let's allow the Iraqis to govern themselves, provide for their own common defense and promote their own general welfare.

Polls inside Iraq indicate that over 80 percent of Iraqis want U.S. forces to leave Iraq and 47 percent think it is justified to kill Americans. 70 percent of Iraqis favor a timetable for withdrawal and 60 percent believe violent attacks will decrease when the U.S. leaves Iraq.

And in the only poll ever taken among American soldiers serving in Iraq, an overwhelming majority, 72%, think the U.S. should exit Iraq within the next year. 42%, said the U.S. mission in Iraq is "either somewhat or very unclear" to them.

The Administration has failed at every attempt to influence the political outcome in Iraq. The secular, western-leaning politicians the Administration propped up did not receive the popular vote of the Iraqis. Interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi received less than 8 percent and Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Chalabi less than 1 percent of the vote in the last parliamentary elections. And contrary to the Administration's hopes, religious clerics and militant sects are exerting significant levels of influence inside their own country. Indeed it emphasizes the difficulty of attempting to install a Jeffersonian style democracy at the point of a gun.

A recent poll conducted in Iraq asked the Iraqis to rate their confidence in public institutions. The Iraqi police scored a 68% confidence level, the Iraqi Army and religious leaders scored 67% and the U.S. forces scored the lowest, a mere 18% . Our military is considered occupiers and the U.S. does not have the popular support of the Iraqi people. Obviously we have lost the hearts and minds.

I am critical of the President's war plan in Iraq because I am concerned about the future of our military and the future of this great country. Although the Administration says things in Iraq are going "very, very well," I believe most American know this is not the case. There is only 6 hours of electricity in Baghdad, only 11 hours nation wide. Oil production is almost 1 million barrels less than pre-war levels per day and attacks have increased from about 150 a week to over 600. Unemployment is up to 90% in Al Anbar Province, a hotbed for violence, and 40-60% in other areas of Iraq.

Theodore Roosevelt said in 1918, "to announce that there must be no criticism of the President, or that we are to stand

by the president, right or wrong, is not only unpatriotic and servile, but is morally treasonable to the American public."