

## April 20, 2006 World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh

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### WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF PITTSBURGH

#### Congressman Murtha's Speech

Pittsburgh, PA - Congressman John Murtha addressed the World Affairs Council in Pittsburgh today at a special 75th anniversary luncheon of the Council. Murtha's prepared text for the speech follows:

As President Theodore Roosevelt said, "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."

It's always a delicate balance when you disagree with a president's policy as I do. But I believe I have an obligation to speak out against what I consider to be a failed policy in Iraq.

The President and the Congress are empowered with sending our sons and daughters into battle, and so it is our job, our responsibility, our obligation to get them out.

I disagree with the president when he says he will leave it up to the combatant commanders.

I have the utmost respect and admiration for our nation's war fighters, some of whom have been deployed to the war theater as many as four and five times. And, I believe it is imperative to separate the war from the warrior.

I do not believe the burden of solving Iraq should continue to fall on our military. It needs to be a political and diplomatic solution. Our soldiers were not trained to be diplomats; they were trained to go to war and destroy an enemy force. They do that very well and I agree with the procedures they use to protect American lives.

Our military has accomplished its mission in Iraq. It is time for the Iraqis to come together to form a unified functioning government and it is time to bring our troops home.

**The management and planning of this war has been mishandled, mischaracterized and misrepresented.**

I believe before we go to war, 1) there should be a threat to our national security, 2) we should use overwhelming force, and 3) we should have an exit strategy. All three of these principles were violated in the case of Iraq.

This is the first prolonged war we have fought with 4 years of tax cuts, without full mobilization of our industry and without a draft.

During the first Gulf War we had full cooperation from the international community. We had the same type of cooperation after 9-11 in our efforts to root out Al Qaeda and the Taliban from Afghanistan. But the war in Iraq has diverted our attention away from global terrorism and has frittered away much of our international support.

We now know that Saddam Hussein posed no imminent danger and no threat to our nation's core interests. We are no longer seen as liberators in Iraq, we are seen as occupiers. The intelligence was faulty. The word of the United States is no longer taken at face value.

I agree with David Kay, the former top U.S. weapons inspector, when he said in an interview with Jim Lehrer, "Our credibility as a nation is what allows us to cooperate with others and influence others towards our own ends. If they doubt the honesty and the objectivity of what we're saying, we're going to be in a world of hurt."

This week marks the 45th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs when the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles on Cuban soil, just 90 miles from the United States. President Kennedy sent former Secretary of State Dean Acheson to brief key foreign leaders on the threat this posed to America and to ask for their support of an American policy to ensure the missiles were removed. Acheson briefed French President Charles de Gaulle and said he had photographic evidence. President de Gaulle responded, "I do not need to see the photographs. The word of the President of the United States is good enough for me." Sadly, this is no longer the case.

In order to restore our international credibility and our leadership position in the world, I believe we must first change direction in Iraq. On November 17, 2005, I introduced a joint resolution to Congress that called for:

- Ø The redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq at the earliest practicable date.
  
- Ø A quick-reaction U.S. force and an over-the-horizon presence of U.S. Marines.
  
- Ø The pursuit of security and stability in Iraq through diplomacy.

It is time that we redeploy from a pervasive occupying presence inside Iraq to a powerful quick-reaction force outside of the country.

Redeployment will bring stability to Iraq and to the region, will strengthen our military and will restore our position as the world's leader. We are the strongest nation in the world and we should not be afraid to change direction.

We must change direction because the nature of the war has changed. We have gone from fighting Saddam's army, to fighting insurgents, to being caught in the middle of a growing civil war.

Ethnic and religious strife has been going on in the Mesopotamian region not for decades or centuries, but for millennia. These particular explosive hatreds and tensions will be there if our troops leave in six months, six years or six decades.

Most experts agree that we should not and cannot stay in Iraq in the midst of a civil war. Even Ambassador Khalizaid, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, said that more Iraqis have been killed in growing sectarian violence than were killed by insurgents. And our military is caught in the middle.

We have lost more than 50 U.S. service members since the beginning of this month and more than 150 have been wounded.

With every additional day we are in Iraq, we are in danger of inciting a highly combustible situation, one that further alienates the Muslim community, or those which we are trying to win over in the "war of ideas".

Zbigniew Brezinski, the former hawkish style NSA Security Advisor under President Carter recently wrote, "The U.S. needs to recognize that its intervention in Iraq is becoming part of a wider, dangerous collision between America and the Muslim world - a collision that could prove, if it becomes widespread, devastating to America's global position. An America in a conflict with the world of Islam as a whole will be an America with more enemies and fewer friends, an America more isolated and less secure."

The war in Iraq is creating decades of damage and instead of quelling the terrorist fervor, it is pouring gasoline on it. We are training our enemies on how to perfect and export IED technology (roadside bombs) in such ways as to create maximum damage to life, limb and property.

Our continued military presence in Iraq is a recruiting tool for the al Qaeda and unifies Iraqis against us. Who wants us to stay in Iraq besides this Administration? I will tell you who wants us in Iraq: al Qaeda, China and Iran because while we are there we continue to deplete our human and financial resources.

Our departure from inside of Iraq will incentivize the Iraqis, who currently are demonstrating no sense of urgency in seating a functioning government and one that will take on responsibility for its own security.

It has been more than 4 months since the Iraqis elected their parliament. Yet the Iraqis continue to stumble and delay in their efforts to form a broad-based government. Meanwhile, more than 225 of our service men and women have lost their lives during this time of inaction by the Iraqis.

Now let's take a harder look at the bigger picture. We must not lose the capability to confront our future adversaries and threats. We cannot continue down the open-ended, stay-the-course path in Iraq because it is jeopardizing the future of our military and the future of our great nation.

George Washington said, "To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace." Yet our military is overstretched. Our military equipment is chewed up. Due to the high cost of this war, the future programs that ensure our military dominance are at risk. Our military needs rebuilding.

Let me talk first about:

Personnel Issues:

Ø In 2005, the active duty Army missed its recruiting goal of 80,000 by 6,627.

Ø In addition, in an attempt to meet its recruiting goals, the Army lowered its recruiting standards. One of the reports we received was that the Army recruit class of 2005 included 19% Category 4 recruits. Category 4 is the lowest measure on the aptitude test given by the military to all recruits. At the beginning of 2006 the Army continued this trend of recruiting a higher percentage of category 4 recruits than in the past.

Ø By failing to meet its recruiting and quality goals, the Army will be unable to meet its new force structure levels of 502,000 troops and 43 active duty combat brigades. As such, the Army cannot sustain current deployment levels to Iraq and Afghanistan. If it is required to do so, the Army will be forced to send many more units back to the theater without one year of rest.

Ø Even worse, the Army National Guard was only able to meet 80% of its 2005 recruiting goal. The Army Reserve met only 84% of its 2005 recruiting goal. As a result, combat support and combat service support units, already under severe stress because of the Iraq war, will be under even greater pressure. We received reports from the field that some of these units are now returning for the fifth time in three years - especially military police, transportation specialists, and civil affairs units.

Ø To make matters worse, OSD is recommending that the Army Guard cut its combat brigades from 34 to 28. By all appearances, these cuts were made strictly because the Army does not have sufficient funding to field the force it needs.

Ø In addition, a November GAO report indicated that service wide, there is a shortage of 112,000 in key military specialties, including intelligence, special forces, demolition and translators.

Ø It is estimated that at least 50,000 of our war veterans will experience battle fatigue and will require extensive treatment.

Equipment Shortage Issues:

Ø Equipment shortages are rife throughout the Army. This has driven readiness rates of those active duty units here at home to the lowest rating. I visited Fort Bragg, Fort Stewart, and Fort Hood last summer and they were all at the lowest state of readiness due to equipment shortages.

Ø The list of active duty Army equipment shortages includes critical items such as trucks, radios, personnel protection

gear, and heavy platforms such as tanks, personnel carriers and armored vehicles. The Administration's budget continues to under fund Army equipment needs, leaving it to Congress to address shortfalls.

Ø But the Army reserve forces have also been adversely affected. Army Guard units showing up for training before deploying to Iraq have only 50% of their heavy platforms. Also, the head of the National Guard reported that the Army and Air Guard were short some \$1.3 billion in equipment to handle the recent Katrina disaster. The Congress responded by providing \$1.0 billion in the FY06 Appropriations Bill.

#### Equipment Rehabilitation:

Ø Equipment shortages are both a near-term and a longer-term problem. The Army estimates that it will cost about \$22 billion to rehabilitate equipment coming back from Iraq (over the next four years).

Ø In addition, the Army estimates it will cost another \$20 billion to recapitalize the force over the next 5 years; that is, replace equipment that is worn out, lost in battle, or at the end of its service life.

Ø If one includes costs for repairing and replacing Marine Corps and other services' equipment used in the war, the figure easily approaches \$50 billion in total. These costs have not been budgeted in the Pentagon's five-year plan.

It would be almost impossible for the U.S. to meet the current military strength deployment schedule without sending combat units back to the theater with less than one year of rest.

We have no strategic reserve; that is, the Army could not sustain a major second-front deployment.

One of my greatest concerns is when this war ends, and I believe it will relatively soon, the money for the DoD which funds our military, will dry up. This will have an adverse effect on the quality of our military for years to come. We will be forced to go to war with what we have instead of what we need.

Today our military should be unsurpassed in terms of strength, training and technology when compared to other countries. We thought our military could do anything, but we found something we could not do. Our military is not a world police force. They are trained to destroy an enemy, which they do very well. But they are not trained to be policemen, or nation builders, or diplomats, and yet that is what they are being asked to do every day.

As part of the re-deployment strategy, and in order to re-establish our role as a "world leader," we must replace the people responsible for the failed plan. We will not be able to get international help without it. It must be seen as a change in direction.

I am not saying there will be complete peace inside of Iraq when we re-deploy, but democracy and a seated government does not guarantee complete peace either. There may be additional sectarian strife, but our troops will not be caught in the middle of it. We will have a quick reactionary force available to deploy if our national security is at risk.

In the meantime, we can be rebuilding and strengthening our military and our nation and can begin taking care of the problems our war fighters will be facing when they return home.

The federal debt when President Bush took office was \$5.7 trillion. Today the federal debt is \$8.4 trillion. War costs are approaching \$500 billion (that's a half a trillion dollars). In the last fiscal year, the Pentagon reported spending approximately \$6 billion per month in Iraq alone. Here is what we can buy with money we are currently spending on the war:

At the Administration's current average rate of spending, it will take 47 years to implement the security requirements needed to secure our ports. Yet we can accomplish this with just one month of war spending.

Our local police, fire and emergency responders are dangerously under-funded. About \$19.6 billion is needed over the next five years to meet these needs. We can accomplish this with about 3 1/2 months of war spending.

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- As of FY 2006, despite terrorist attacks on transit systems in Japan and Spain, less than \$550 million had been provided to improve rail and transit security since September 11th. The transit industry estimates that about 6 billion is needed to make the necessary security enhancements. One month of war funding can pay for this.

The President's budget for FY07 increases health care premiums for 3.1 million of our nation's military retirees under 65. Premiums will double and triple and drug co-payments will increase, costing our military retirees \$2.4 billion over 5 years. We can roll back the President's budget recommendations with less than a half a month of war spending.

The Administration says they are in Iraq for the long haul. The president says we will stay. But meanwhile, he stops reconstruction projects and funding with no plan to re-start the projects. He cuts the budgets for State Department programs which promote democracy, even those with proven track records. Is this the picture of an administration that plans on staying in Iraq? No, this is the picture of an administration that knows they are getting out. They agree with me, but just won't admit it. This is the picture of an Administration that just won't admit it was wrong.

Secretary Rumsfeld's legacy was that we can do anything with a smaller, lighter and more lethal force. Well, he was wrong when it came to Iraq. He just won't admit it.

And the President's major foreign policy initiative was to create an area in the Middle East friendly to the West. Spreading democracy was supposed to be the cure for instability and hostility toward the west. But, the President was wrong and he just won't admit it.

Today marks the 1,128th day of the war in Iraq. To put this into perspective, this is one day more than between the time the Korean War began and the time the cease fire was signed. Now, in the 4th year of the war in Iraq, the results of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq are inconclusive at best. Although the President touts the political milestones as a success in Iraq, in reality we have not made the progress we anticipated nor have we met the high expectations of the Iraqi people. Indeed when it comes to this war, we have lost the hearts and minds of both the Iraqi people and as the polls indicate, the American public.

It's time to admit to mistakes. It's time to re-deploy. It's time to change direction.