

ORDERLY AND RESPONSIBLE IRAQ
REDEPLOYMENT APPROPRIA-
TIONS ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4156, the "Orderly and Responsible Iraq Redeployment Appropriations Act," and I want to commend Speaker PELOSI and the Democratic leadership for bringing this bill to the Floor today.

The American people want a new direction in Iraq. By every measure, this war has cost Americans far too much—whether it's lives lost, dollars spent, or our reputation tarnished around the world.

H.R. 4156 would provide critical funding for the troops while also requiring that troops begin to redeploy from Iraq within 30 days of enactment with a goal of completion by December 15, 2008. The legislation would ensure that troops are not deployed to Iraq unless they have been fully trained and equipped. H.R. 4156 also would extend to all U.S. Government agencies and personnel the current prohibitions contained in the Army Field Manual against torture.

Just this week the Joint Economic Committee, of which I am a vice chair, released a study to examine the broader impact of the war on the American economy. So far the full economic costs of the Iraq war are about double the immense Federal budget costs that have been reported to the American people.

The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that Federal spending on the war could reach \$2.4 trillion by 2017. Our JEC report finds that when you add in the "hidden costs" of the war, the total economic costs will rise by over \$1 trillion to \$3.5 trillion. The report reveals how we are all paying for this war one way or another—whether it's higher prices at the pump, lost business investment, rising interest payments on the debt, or fixing all the broken bodies and our stretched military.

The President has asked Congress for an additional \$200 billion for Iraq, bringing the total request to \$607 billion in direct expenditures since the start of the war. This is well over 10 times more than the \$50 to \$60 billion cost estimated by the Administration prior to the start of the war, with no end in sight from this President.

This legislation sends the President an important message: start bringing our troops home, now.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

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SPEECH OF

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I believe this legislation is the most important bill the House takes up this year because it will bring an end

to the war in Iraq by bringing our troops home safely, honorably, and responsibly.

The bill mandates the start of an "immediate and orderly" withdrawal of U.S. armed forces in Iraq within 30 days after enactment. It also requires that the reduction of forces be done in conjunction with comprehensive diplomatic, political, and economic strategies involving Iraq's neighbors.

The bill provides \$50 billion for the cost of redeployment, not the \$196.4 billion the President has requested to keep the war going.

H.R. 4156 prohibits the use of torture on any person under U.S. custody. This is absolutely necessary because the Administration continues to defend this technique which is not sanctioned in the U.S. Army Field Manual.

The war in Iraq has taken a severe toll on our military. One and one-half million military personnel (or 30 percent of our military) have been deployed to Iraq more than once. Many of our soldiers are redeployed in less than a year. Our troops are exhausted, their equipment is shot and yet the President remains firmly committed to a Korea-like presence in Iraq for years. Our military readiness is severely threatened and our country is less safe today because of the President's ill-conceived and botched-up execution of this war.

The legislation recognizes our military readiness is at its lowest point since the Vietnam war and in order to reverse this, it requires that the President certify to Congress 15 days prior to deployment that our armed forces are "fully mission capable."

This Administration's sole focus on Iraq has left Afghanistan in an extraordinary state of vulnerability. We have seen the reemergence of the Taliban, soaring drug production, and the increase of attacks on U.S. and NATO forces. By all measures, the country is at risk of slipping away. This is a terrible and dangerous mistake. Although time is short, there is still an opportunity to defeat our enemies in Afghanistan once and for all. The President must acknowledge what's at stake and immediately take action to prevent the country from returning to what it was—a haven for international terrorism.

The President's justification for the surge was that "reducing the violence in Baghdad will help make reconciliation possible." By all accounts, including the August 2007 National Intelligence Estimate, NIE, the Iraqi government's political progress is stalled. The NIE stated that the "Iraqi Government will continue to struggle to achieve national-level political reconciliation and improved governance." The NIE goes on to state that "broadly accepted political compromises required for sustained security . . . are unlikely to emerge unless there is a fundamental shift in the factors driving Iraqi political developments." It is clear from this NIE that the Iraqi government has done little if anything to initiate political reconciliation.

The American people are demanding a new direction in Iraq. They do not want the President's 10-year war with no end in sight. In fact 68 percent of Americans oppose the war in Iraq and 60 percent support a withdrawal of our troops.

I strongly support this legislation and urge my colleagues to do so as well. We can begin a new and better chapter for America and the world by changing the policy in Iraq.

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SPEECH OF

HON. JOHN D. DINGELL

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 14, 2007

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Speaker, I support the legislation before us today because I believe it represents a safe and responsible way to bring our troops home from Iraq. The President has had more than four years to demonstrate leadership in Iraq, but at every turn his decisions have dragged us deeper into an ethnic and sectarian crisis that the President seems incapable of solving. Eleven months ago, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group released its report, which offered a comprehensive plan to build up the Iraqi government and create the political and security stability needed to bring our troops home. Unfortunately, the President rejected this bipartisan approach and instead implemented his troop surge. As a result, 2007 was the deadliest year for our troops since the beginning of the war, and we are no closer to a political solution to the problems in Iraq than we were when the troop surge began. Because the President refuses to take responsibility for his failed strategy, I believe it is time for Congress to act.

The legislation before us today provides our troops with the funding and equipment they need to safely do their job. This includes funding for our continued efforts to provide security and support for the government of Afghanistan. However, it is a far cry from the blank check that the President requested. It requires the President to begin redeploying troops out of Iraq within 30 days of enactment, and sets a goal for total redeployment by December 15, 2008. The bill also requires the President to undertake diplomatic efforts designed to engage other regional and international actors in providing for a secure Iraq. It includes important provisions that ensure the first troops sent home are the ones who have served in Iraq the longest, and that no more troops can be sent to Iraq unless they have all of the equipment and training that they need.

I had hoped that this bill would also include funding to address the growing refugee crisis in Iraq. While I am disappointed this issue is not being addressed today, I have been assured that Congress will act soon to assist the millions of Iraqis who have been displaced because of sectarian fighting.

This legislation is not perfect, but I believe that it is worth supporting because it will require the President to do something he has so far refused to do: explain to the public how he plans to get our troops out of Iraq. In fact, this bill would make it clear to the President that he will not get one more dime from Congress until his redeployment plan has been submitted. I applaud Chairman OBEY for staying true to his pledge to send the President an Iraq spending bill with accountability and timelines built in. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation because it represents an important first step towards holding the President accountable and safely bringing our troops home from Iraq.