

FISCAL YEAR 2008 HOUSE CURRENT LEVEL REPORT AS OF JANUARY 23, 2008—Continued

| | Budget authority | Outlays | Revenues |
|---|------------------|-----------|------------|
| Pased, pending signature: | | | |
| National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (H.R. 4986) | -6 | -31 | 2 |
| Entitlements and mandatories: | | | |
| Budget resolution estimates of appropriated entitlements and other mandatory programs | -47,171 | -35,725 | 0 |
| Total Current Level ^{1,2} | 2,333,106 | 2,346,261 | 2,000,661 |
| Total Budget Resolution ³ | 2,500,489 | 2,474,575 | 2,016,859 |
| Adjustment to the budget resolution for emergency requirements ⁴ | -606 | -49,900 | n.a. |
| Adjustment to the budget resolution pursuant to section 207(d)(1)(E) ⁵ | -145,162 | -65,754 | n.a. |
| Adjusted Budget Resolution | 2,354,721 | 2,358,831 | 2,016,859 |
| Current Level Over Adjusted Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |
| Current Level Under Adjusted Budget Resolution | 21,615 | 12,570 | 16,198 |
| Memorandum: | | | |
| Revenues, 2008-2012: | | | |
| House Current Level | n.a. | n.a. | 11,267,618 |
| House Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | 11,141,734 |
| Adjusted Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | 11,141,734 |
| Current Level Over Adjusted Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | 125,884 |
| Current Level Under Adjusted Budget Resolution | n.a. | n.a. | n.a. |

Note: n.a. = not applicable; P.L. = Public Law.
SOURCE: Congressional Budget Office.

¹ Pursuant to section 204(b) of S. Con. Res. 21, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, provisions designated as emergency requirements are exempt from enforcement of the budget resolution. The amounts so designated for fiscal year 2008, which are not included in the current level totals, are as follows:

| | Budget authority | Outlays | Revenues |
|--|------------------|---------|----------|
| U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (P.L. 110-28) | 605 | 48,639 | n.a. |
| An act making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes (P.L. 110-92) | 5,200 | 1,024 | n.a. |
| Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-116) | 11,630 | 1,047 | n.a. |
| Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-116B) | 6,400 | 1,369 | n.a. |
| Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (P.L. 110-161) | 81,125 | 40,568 | n.a. |
| Total, enacted emergency requirements | 104,960 | 92,647 | n.a. |

² For purposes of enforcing section 311 of the Congressional Budget Act in the House, the budget resolution does not include budget authority, outlays, or revenues for off-budget amounts. As a result, current level excludes these items.
³ Periodically, the House Committee on the Budget revises the totals in S. Con. Res. 21, pursuant to various provisions of the resolution:

| | Budget authority | Outlays | Revenues |
|---|------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Original Budget Resolution | 2,496,028 | 2,469,636 | 2,015,858 |
| Revisions: | | | |
| To reflect the difference between the assumed and actual nonemergency supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2007 (section 207(f)) | 1 | 1 | -17 |
| For extension of the Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) program (section 320(c)) | 96 | 99 | 0 |
| For the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (section 306(b)) | -176 | -842 | 0 |
| Extension of the Transitional Medical Assistance (TMA) program (section 320(c)) (updated to reflect final scoring) | 815 | 804 | 0 |
| For the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (section 302) | -6 | -31 | 2 |
| For the Energy Independence & Security Act of 2007 (section 308(b)(1)) | 66 | 64 | 1,016 |
| For the Terrorism Risk Insurance Revision & Extension Act of 2007 (section 310) | 200 | 200 | 0 |
| For changes in the Medicare, Medicaid and SCHIP Extension Act of 2007 (sections 301, 304(a), 320(a)(c)) | 3,465 | 4,644 | 0 |
| Revised Budget Resolution | 2,500,489 | 2,474,575 | 2,016,859 |

⁴ S. Con. Res. 21 assumed \$606 million in budget authority and \$49,990 million in outlays from emergency supplemental appropriations. Such emergency amounts are exempt from the enforcement of the budget resolution. Since current level totals exclude the emergency requirements enacted in P.L. 110-28 (see footnote 1 above), budget authority and outlay totals specified in the budget resolution also have been reduced (by the amounts assumed for emergency supplemental appropriations) for purposes of comparison.

⁵ Section 207(d)(1)(E) of S. Con. Res. 21 assumed \$145,162 million in budget authority and \$65,754 million in outlays for overseas deployment and related activities. Because action to date has not triggered this provision, the House Committee on the Budget has directed that these amounts be excluded from the budget resolution aggregates in the current level report.

HONORING THE AUGUSTA METRO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and pay tribute to a non-profit community organization in my 10th Congressional District of Georgia.

The Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce is celebrating more than 100 years of dedicated service to Augusta, Georgia's economic development. Founded in 1905, the chamber has grown to include more than 1,100 members. The chamber and its members provide citizens with a strong business environment that increases employment, retail trade and commerce, and industrial growth in Augusta.

The Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce has worked to promote a prosperous future for all Augustans through legislative efforts and through networking programs, such as Women in Business, Leadership Augusta, and the Chamber Business Academy. The chamber promotes healthy and productive workforces through its nationally-recognized Drugs Don't Work program.

The Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce is also committed to being a good neighbor, with committees designated to serve as liaisons between businesses and local educators

and military communities. Furthermore, the chamber promotes business while working carefully to protect Augusta's natural environment. The chamber works with State and Federal agencies to minimize the impact economic development has on the environment.

Such a diligent organization is to be commended for its efforts. The Augusta Metro Chamber of Commerce is an investment in the present and future well-being of the Augusta community. As it celebrates a centennial milestone, may this chamber of commerce continue steadfast in its work to ensure Augusta's continued competitiveness in our domestic and global economies.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

IRAQ ASSESSMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, as we begin to talk about our national security and our troops and the surge and the success of that and why our troops choose to defend this great Nation, I want to stop and just join Mr. GINGREY in congratulating his mother on her 90th birthday. Certainly, Helen Cecelia Gingrey sounds like the type of woman that truly takes a leadership role, first of all, in her family and role models that leadership and how to carry that out in how to encourage children to dream big dreams and have great adventures in their life and to desire that.

That is something you learn at a mother's knee. That is something you see role modeled by parents, and Mr. Speaker, that is something that we need to keep in mind as we are here on the floor of the House in this body, as we make decisions about how our Nation moves forward in this 21st century.

We need to remember that there are future generations that are relying on us to be certain that this Nation stays secure. There are future generations that are looking to us that go every single day and say, what will my tomorrow be like? Is my community going to be secure? What is America going to look like when I am 20, when I'm 30, when I get ready to retire?

We would do well to be mindful of that every single day as we make decisions that affect America's families and realize, yes, indeed, those families are our greatest treasure. Those precious minds of those precious children are indeed what we are to be protecting and be certain that they have the ability to dream those big dreams.

So to Dr. GINGREY's mom, Helen Gingrey, happy birthday. We all congratulate you, and we are so pleased that we live in a free Nation and we can stand on the floor of this House and celebrate those birthdays and join your son in wishing you happy birthday and many, many more.

Mr. Speaker, I recently did return from a trip to Afghanistan and Iraq to visit with our troops. And tonight I want to spend some time talking about what has been going on in Iraq and the success that we have seen there, the success that our troops have brought to bear on Iraq and on the environment that is there.

Just about 3 weeks ago, we had the 1-year anniversary of the surge, and everyone had a lot to say about that surge and a lot to say about how successful they thought it would or would not be. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's very easy for us to be Monday morning quarterbacks or armchair quarterbacks and to always have our opinion of how we think these things are going to work out.

The 101st is in my district in Tennessee. We also have the National Guardsmen from our State that have been deployed, Reservists who have been deployed, and we would always say we need to be listening to the troops that are in the field and the commanders that are there on the ground.

We saw a change about a year ago. The change was in the form of the surge. The implementation of that surge was carried out by General David Petraeus. He was joined by Ambassador Crocker as they moved forward with the preparations and the implementation of that surge, and we have seen results.

Over the December and January period of time, we had the opportunity to visit, and I am pleased to be joined tonight by my colleague from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) who has been on the ground in Iraq several times, I think six times he has been to visit our troops in Iraq. And he wanted to join me tonight for a few minutes and talk about what he saw and give a firsthand account of what he saw.

I'm so pleased that he has chosen to join us because one of the things our

troops mentioned to us on our trip was, We are fighting every day. We are in a war. And we are winning significant battles every single day. And we want the American people to know we are fighting. We are giving it our all, and yes, indeed, we are winning every day.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it's important for us to realize that a lot of times, success comes in odd ways. Progress comes in unexpected ways. And it is not just on a trajectory where every day is better and better and better. We take a few steps forward, we take a few steps back. We take a few more steps forward, we take a little step back. But when you add it up, you are trending the right direction.

That is certainly what we have seen in the success of the surge. We have seen every major news outlet declare it a success. The American people know that it is a success. And our troops are to be commended for that success. Certainly, the President was right in making that commendation last night.

As I said a moment ago, Dr. BURGESS from Texas who's been to Iraq six times wants to join us and share his impressions of what he saw on the ground in Iraq, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from Tennessee for yielding to me.

It is kind of ironic. We were here on the floor of this House last night. The House was full, Members on both sides. We heard the President deliver his final State of the Union address, and of course, as is typical for a State of the Union address, he touched on subjects near and far, went through the domestic agenda, went through the foreign agenda.

When he got to talking about the conditions on the ground in Iraq, I don't know about the gentlelady from Tennessee, but I was just absolutely struck by the scene in this House when he commended the troops for the activities and the success that they had achieved on the ground. One-half of the House stood up and applauded; the other half sat on their hands.

And Mr. Speaker, I don't know if there's been another time in American history when America goes to war, sends their sons and daughters to war, America is winning the war, and it's become something we don't want to talk about. There's other things that command our attention now, and we'll go on to other things.

The gentlelady was right, it was a year ago that we stood on the floor of this House and debated for hour after hour after hour on the efficacy of sending additional troops to Iraq. We were told by the majority leader over in the Senate, the Democratic majority leader, that the war was lost; there was no need to send additional men because we had already made the decision in the Senate, or the other body in the Capitol of the United States, that the war was over and the war was indeed lost.

The gentlelady's right, you can pick data points to prove whatever you

want to prove in Iraq. They're all over the map, but if you look at trend lines over time, you begin to see a story taking shape, and that is the story that began to take shape in April of last year, perhaps a little reinforced in June of last year, July of last year.

My most recent trip to Iraq, my sixth trip, I wasn't sure what I was going to find because when you picked up the papers, the data points were scattered all over the place, but little by little, the story came out. And about a week after I was there in July, the New York Times finally broke the story, hey, there's a war we just might win going on in the country of Iraq, written by two individuals who, quite frankly, aren't always on the side of the President of the United States, so it seems, in their writings in the New York Times. The New York Times itself is not always on the same page as the President in a lot of foreign policy issues, but there it was in black and white for all to see.

Now, I went to Iraq in July of 2007. I very much wanted to go because I knew that the surge had started. I knew that General Petraeus had committed to come back and present data to Congress in September of 2007 to talk about the success, or lack thereof, of the additional reinforcements that were sent into the country of Iraq. And I knew that this House, I knew myself as a Member of this House, was going to have to come to some decisions or some conclusions, if it's working it or it's not working; if it's not working, we will have to rethink the strategy.

So it was an important trip for me to take because I knew on every other trip that I had taken to Iraq what I saw on the ground bore no resemblance to what I was seeing on my television screens on CNN and CBS and the evening news and the morning shows. You have to go and look at it for yourselves to be able to understand what is happening.

You know it's not an easy job. It was a brief war, but it's been a long hard slog to get to where we are today, and history will have to decide whether the investment in time, the investment in lives, the investment in families who are deprived of their loved ones during these long deployments, history will decide the accuracy of the words that we speak tonight.

But I will tell you from the strength of that last trip in July and what I have seen reported since that time, I have to believe that this country going forward is going to be in far better shape in 10 years', 20 years', 30 years' time because we have an Iraq that has an opportunity now to be a stable partner in a quest for peace in the Middle East, as opposed to a haven and an outpost for continued terrorism in that part of the world.

In July of 2006, I took a trip to Iraq. Peter Chiarelli on that trip said, you know, it's funny, I don't know what to make of it, but in a part of the country of Iraq that is very, very dangerous, al

Anbar province, a city called Ramadi, we don't know what to make of it but some insurgents that were in the hospital yesterday turned over all of their arms to our soldiers, and we'll just have to wait and see what develops. In fact, he asked me not to talk about it when I got back in July of 2006 because, again, he was not sure what that meant.

July of 2007, fast forward to that time. We got off the C-130 in Baghdad International Airport, get on the helicopters and are immediately taken to Ramadi. Ramadi, that was too dangerous a place to travel to a year before, was our first stop. We met General Gaston of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force there on the ground in Ramadi. Ramadi is a city about the size of Ft. Worth. Ft. Worth, Texas, is the largest city in my district back home. It was the provincial capital of the resurgent caliphate as established by al Qaeda in western Iraq.

The reality, though, was that things had changed enormously over that past year and in ways that, quite honestly, had not been reported in the press back here at home. Again, I didn't know what I was going to find when I went there, but I have to tell you the job that was done by the Marines in the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, the job that was done by the troops on the ground on these long deployments that they were undertaking, the job was truly phenomenal.

A year before I would not have been able to travel to the city of Ramadi. Now, not only could I travel to the city of Ramadi, after the briefing, after the endless Power Point that the military always gives you when you go over there, we got in vehicles and drove to downtown Ramadi.

□ 1945

I've got to tell you, I was a little concerned; General Gaston, are you sure that it's okay for us to go to downtown Ramadi? Last year, General Chiarelli said it's kind of dangerous out there. He said, "Let's go."

We drove downtown. It was a Saturday morning, early on a Saturday morning. We drove to the market. It looked like a market any other place in the Middle East. There was a lot of activity. In fact, there were the typical sights and sounds of a city that has, perhaps, seen better days. They were working on some sewer pipes. There was, in fact, a little bit of construction going on.

But this photograph was taken last July 17th in the city of Ramadi. This shows the shops. I don't know where all this stuff came from. If this was an American market, I would assume all this stuff came from China. I'm not sure where it was made. But all of these wares were for sale, and there was shop after shop after shop lined up and down either side of the street.

You can see the faces of the young men there; a little bit of curiosity, all of these Americans showing up and

walking through their streets. I'm sure for them it was a sight that they had not seen too often. But again, you see on the faces of these young men, these are not faces that are suspicious, these are not faces that are fearful, these are faces that are smiling. They were, in fact, glad to see us. And I found out a few minutes later why they were glad to see us; they were hoping that we had a pen or a quarter. They had apparently been well coached by our marines. Their school was going to start in a few weeks, and because they would be attending their classes, they were anxious to know if we had a writing instrument that we might part with that they could have.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield.

Mr. BURGESS. I'll be happy to yield.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I would like to put that photo back up, if you do not mind.

Now, I think it is significant that you're talking about Ramadi, which is in al Anbar Province. And you're talking about a photo that was made during the summer, July 14, 2007, which is the photo stamp date that is there on the photo. And if I am picking all of this up, it looks like tools and implements that are hanging in the ceiling of the shop, and plastic buckets, rubber buckets, and probably some plastic hampers that are there. And when I was in Iraq, I noticed that there was lots of produce that was also being sold in some of the shops.

But one of the things that is of interest to me is the photo that you're showing indicates to us that we do have import and export that is taking place, and we do have commerce that is taking place. And so, as you were on that street in Ramadi, how many shops did you see; do you remember a number? How many were lining the street? And how far did you drive from the base into town to begin to see this type of commerce and the happy kids that are obviously learning how to do a little bit of retail merchant work there?

I yield back to the gentleman.

Mr. BURGESS. Well, I'll be honest, I don't remember the number of shops. There were many. Perhaps on the side street that we were on, at least a dozen on one side, and then a similar number on the other side.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. If the gentleman will yield, a dozen shops in any of our towns in our districts is a pretty good number of shops. So, we've got a lot of commerce that is beginning to take place there. And I yield back.

Mr. BURGESS. And of course I do need to make the point that this was an area that just a few months before had seen some of the most intense fighting. And many of the buildings at the front of the street, well, let's just put it this way, a JDAM doesn't do anything for your drive-up appeal. And there were several buildings that obviously had suffered the scars of war. But as you went a little further down the street, you began to come upon scenes such as this.

And I would simply point out that at the very edge of the photograph here, and I had forgotten this, we see a brightly colored garment set that looks like it would be appropriate for a woman to wear. I saw more women on this trip to Iraq than I can recall seeing at any other trip where I had been through the country. And it was, to me, reassuring that the female members of Iraqi society felt comfortable enough to travel out to the shops on a Saturday morning and be with their husbands and their children, as you so eloquently point out, as commerce was breaking out all over on the streets of Ramadi.

Again, I just want to show another picture of some children. These guys were pretty curious as to what was going on with all of these strange folks that had shown up and were walking through town. Again, you can see in the background some additional brightly colored wares for sale. This fellow turned out to be fairly inquisitive. And he had a keen interest, again, in writing instruments that I want to assume that's because his school was starting up in a few weeks' time.

What has been described as "The Anbar Awakening," we heard the President reference it last night, began in the city of Ramadi where the Sunnis began to recognize, you know, these guys from al Qaeda; they're actually not our friends. They refer to the Americans as occupiers, but maybe it's the al Qaeda guys that are actually the occupiers. And we do believe that at some point the Americans want to go home, but we can't say the same for our friends in al Qaeda. And the Sunni sheiks, the tribal leaders in the towns, rapidly turned it. And to hear it be described by our marines and our soldiers there, it literally turned on a few weeks' time, some rather intense fighting as the surge began to mount its full reinforcement, and then suddenly things changed dramatically for the better.

And for me, on this trip, the one thing that I saw that was different from any other trip that I had taken over there on the ground, now, we can criticize the Baghdad government, and both sides of the aisle I know will do that with regularity, I may do so before this night is over, but the local political shift that's taking place on the ground in Iraq, the county commissioners, the city councilmen, the mayors that are doing the kinds of work that you want your local government to do, you know, quite honestly, I go home every weekend and the people are happy to see me. But if there's a problem at home, most of the time they're not going to call their Congressman; they'll call their mayor, they'll call their county commissioner, or they'll call their county administrator or their county judge because those are the folks that are closest to the people, and it's up to them to deliver for their constituents, the same conditions we have here in our districts back home.

The local political shift really is what, to me, is the fundamental building block of the return of civil society, a civil society that had been so badly damaged under the years of Saddam, a civil society that has been so badly damaged by the war and then the insurgency that followed is now beginning to take hold. And it is very effective.

Now, the question remains, will the central government in Baghdad respond to the needs of those local officials with enough dispatch that they are, in fact, bolstered and supported by the central government in Baghdad? It is sometimes startling to me to think that a government so young can already have such an entrenched bureaucracy that is slow to act. But nevertheless, we hear some stories coming out that there is more and more of this type of activity occurring. But again, the stability at the local level was something that I don't think I can tell you that I had witnessed on any of the five previous trips through that country. All of those trips more dealt with the security that our forces were establishing. Now we see the security that is actually being established by the Iraqis themselves.

They had a job fair, I understand, in this part of town about a week before and hired everything that showed up. And there were a lot of people that came. The jobs were fairly labor intensive. Again, there had been a lot of bombing in the city. There was a lot of concrete littering the street that had to be picked up. The reinforcing steel that was embedded in the concrete had to be broken out or dissected out. There were several groups of men that were straightening out this rebar to use as reconstruction projects. But again, the work was going on. And the mood, this was July in western Iraq, it's 10 o'clock in the morning and probably already 125 degrees, but the mood of the people was truly something that I will always remember because they were doing for themselves the types of things that free people want to do for themselves. And it was a wonderful feeling. And you know the soldiers could feel it, too, when they walk through these towns.

The ability to give to these young men a life ahead of them that they wouldn't have had, they would have been conscripted into Saddam's army and fought a war at someplace or other; they now have a life ahead of them that really, quite honestly, their parents dared not hope for them and now it is brought to them courtesy of the United States Marines, United States Army.

I yield back to the gentlelady from Tennessee, and I want to thank her for allowing me to participate in the discussion this evening.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding back the time. And I am so pleased to see these pictures. And I appreciate so much his participation in this, and the conversation

about the establishment of commerce and how he witnessed this firsthand with shops that were open. As he said, one little side street where they went there were about 12 shops that were on that. And indeed, these are more like stalls that we would have at one of our swap meets or flea markets. But as you can see, they're full of kids that are happy, that are playing, that are enjoying being around the normalcy of a life. They are full of commerce and goods, items that are coming in for sale. We even saw soft drinks, Coca-Cola. In Afghanistan, we saw cell phones that were being sold. So, in this region of the world, the commerce that is there on the ground.

And in talking about Iraq, the gentleman mentioned the local stability. And indeed, that was something we had the opportunity to witness, also, and we're pleased to see that. We had a visit to Urbil in Kurdistan, had the opportunity to go to the home of the Prime Minister of Kurdistan. We drove to that home. Mr. Speaker, I want to be certain that everyone realizes what I just said. We drove to the home of the Prime Minister of Kurdistan for lunch and joined him where he thanked us profusely for all that the U.S. Armed Forces have done for that region, not only in the past few years, but for the decade prior.

While we were in Iraq, we had the opportunity to go to the home of Deputy Prime Minister Barzani, to his home in the Green Zone to meet with him. And I will tell you, we visited with him about how hopeful we had experienced the mood of the people. There is a sense of hope that things are getting better, that there is a return to normalcy in their everyday life, and how encouraging to us it was to witness this hopefulness.

His comment to us was, we know that sometimes people get frustrated with us, but do not give up this mission. Do not give up on this mission because things are trending the right direction. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it's all important components in winning, in having Iraq be a nation that can function with some predictability, stability and self-governance.

It is also important because, as we look at defeating terrorists who want to defeat us, it is important that we win the war of ideas. And the photos that Dr. BURGESS shared with us, the young men in those photos, we have to win the war of ideas with them to reach them, to make certain that over the next decade, as they begin an adult life, that they make a choice to live in freedom rather than choosing a life under a dictator.

Indeed, our job is also to make certain that our troops have what they need to do their job. And that is a responsibility of this House, as the President said last night. And certainly, as we are in the midst of a swing, a dramatic swing, if you will, in the momentum in Iraq, especially on the security situation, it is imperative that we pay

close attention to meeting the needs of those troops.

Now, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you, I do not think it is helpful to this situation that we debated over 30 different resolutions about Iraq and timelines and withdrawals and trying to micromanage what is taking place on the ground because there has been a swing and a shift. We have transitioned from 2.5 years of increases in violence with more than 24 weeks of a steady decline.

Now, Dr. BURGESS mentioned, when we go to Iraq, and I want to clarify one thing here before I move on, this week I had the opportunity to visit with the Tennessee Marine Family Association, and what a wonderful, wonderful group of moms and dads and brothers and sisters and marines who have retired from active duty. And I enjoyed my time with them tremendously. And one of them said, you know, tell me, when you go to Iraq, why do you go? And are you taking the troops' time away from work in the field? And I said no, we go because we are asked to go, especially those of us that have posts. As I've said, Fort Campbell, the 101st is in my district, and they invite us and ask us to come and see how they are carrying out their mission and experience that firsthand with them.

□ 2000

But as Dr. BURGESS said, when we make those trips, we have the power points and we have the briefings from the commanders on the ground and we have the opportunity while we are there to hold a town hall meeting, if you will, with our troops that are deployed and are carrying out this mission. So I have put some of that endless power point onto some charts that I would like to share with those who are watching us this evening.

The first chart that I'm going to show you is one that comes from our commanders there in Iraq, and it shows their assessment of al Qaeda Iraq. And many times people will see AQI, that is, the abbreviation for al Qaeda Iraq, and where they were when the surge began last year. And you can see the dark red areas. It shows where they were operating, and the pink areas show what were their transit routes. And you can see how in the city of Baghdad where they were operating, and then as you look at the country you can see where they were transiting in and out of the country and then where they were holding their primary areas of operation. Again, the pink shading is their transit areas, and the red is where they were operational and where they were working. And the inset is Baghdad and what we saw in Baghdad and how that looked before the surge began.

Now I want to move to the second chart and show you what this looks like today. This is what Iraq looks like today. And, again, this is not my chart. This is a chart from our commanders on the ground in Iraq. This is their assessment.

So, Mr. Speaker, to the American people that are watching this tonight, I will simply say this is the chart that is your commanders' assessment of where al Qaeda is as of December 2007. And, of course, al Qaeda is still a threat. Of course, they are still there. But as you can see, by looking at the pink areas and the red areas, this has been diminished. They have been pushed out of the urban centers, look at the inset, with Baghdad. You can see where they have been squeezed down and where they have been moved to and how much smaller their area of operation is and how much smaller their transit area is. They know that the Iraqi people, the Iraqi forces, and the U.S. Armed Forces and our coalition forces mean business on this.

Look at the map of the entire country. When you can see their egress, ingress with the surrounding countries, and then see the pockets where al Qaeda Iraq is still operational. So they have been pushed out of many of the urban areas, and they have been moved over into some of the isolated rural areas.

I want to touch base too on our troops' contribution to this because it has been significant. Our U.S. Armed Forces and the 30,000 that went in for the surge made a marked difference. And I think there is, of course, the physical strength that our troops brought to this, the firepower, if you will, and the training and the strength and the determination. There are no better forces on the face of the Earth than the U.S. military. And we also have to recognize the Iraqis and the force that they brought to bear on this.

When we talk about the surge, sometimes many of us think only in terms of the 30,000 of our troops that have led the way in this fight. What we have to realize also is that we have 110,000 Iraqi troops that have lent their power to this effort, 110,000. They were joined in this effort by 70,000 local citizens.

Dr. BURGESS mentioned earlier the local stability, and there is a reason for that. You had 70,000 Iraqi citizens that basically banded together in what we would call a "neighborhood watch," and they decided to take things into their own hands and to take responsibility. And in many of these areas in the surge the Iraqi troops would lead. They were coached. They were trained. They were supported in so many ways by our U.S. military and by our coalition forces. And the local Iraqi citizen groups would work with those military forces, those combined forces. So together you had 180,000 Iraqis working with our 30,000 U.S. troops that have made this surge successful and have changed that map so that it looks today like it does, with al Qaeda being moved into some isolated areas and with more of the country being able to function with a sense of normalcy.

Now, we've already talked a little bit about al Anbar province and the success that was there because that is where al Qaeda Iraq had planted its

flag. It was the capital of the caliphate, and that is where they were going to put down roots, if you will. What we saw happen in al Anbar province during the surge, I think, is just nothing short of remarkable, and the photos that you've just seen from the streets of Ramadi and the commerce that was taking place and the difference that the surge has made there. Basically, the citizens of Ramadi and al Anbar province said we are sick and tired of this. We do not want al Qaeda Iraq to be running the show in our town. So they joined with the Iraqi troops and the U.S. troops, and they literally threw al Qaeda out.

So many of the experts tell us that this is the first place that the Arab people have stood up to their own and have rejected, openly rejected, al Qaeda and have defeated al Qaeda. And I think that that is significant. And, Mr. Speaker, I believe and I certainly am hopeful in believing that we are going to see other areas follow the lead that al Anbar has set.

Now, we have seen some other effects of that team effort over the past year, and I want to move on to a couple of other charts. Now, this is the overall attack trends, Iraq attack trends; and it shows you what has happened, if you look from December 2006, and where your attacks were in December 2006, with over 5,000, and then you go up into April and May where they reach their height, and then you can see where they have dropped down, less than half, and the reduction that is there. It is actually down about 60 percent by the time you get to December 2007. That is the difference that the surge has made. From December 2006, where you're up above 5,000 attacks and then coming down where you have seen that number drop by about 60 percent. That's the difference that the surge has made in the overall attacks.

Well, let's look at the IED explosions. This is something that our constituents always ask us about because they hear so much about the explosive devices and the way these IEDs and these IED systems are developed and set up and the way those explosions are carried out.

You can see, if you go in here and you look at December 2006, where they are. They move up in June to a high of about 1,700, and then take a look over here, about 700 in December. And there you go from beginning to the end of surge, the year of the surge, and what you have seen. It is almost as if you have al Qaeda jumping in here and saying we're not going to let them get the best of us. They give it a shot, and then in June look how every single month you're dropping. And that's the difference that a year of the surge has made.

Let's move on to another figure on this chart, the killed-in-action figure. And as we look at this chart and we see the dramatic drop that is here, Mr. Speaker, we feel so deeply for the families that have experienced a loss, and

at Fort Campbell we have seen some losses recently, and we just continue to hold those families close. And we are grateful, so grateful, to them for their service, for their sacrifice, and we grieve with them in those losses. And we know that over the course of the year we have seen a dramatic decrease in those losses.

Now, chart number six, the Iraqi civilian deaths attributed to violence, these have dropped significantly. And you can see in December 2006, where we were at about 3,000 and then where we are way down, well under 1,000 by the time we get to December 2007. So this shows us how security is improving. Ethnosexual violence has dropped by about 85 percent. All of these are the right type trend. And it shows how things are moving a little bit at a time, moving in the right direction.

We know there are no guarantees. This is tough. Our military men and women know that they are fighting and winning every day. But, Mr. Speaker, I will tell you they do know that they are seeing some successes, that security is improving, and that they are seeing some success with economic issues. And I want to give you just a couple of examples of these.

I had made a comment as we were leaving Baghdad the other night, and it was in the evening; so you could see the lights in Baghdad. I had been going in and out to visit our troops since 2003, and for the first time it really looked like a city. You could see the lights on all over the city and cars driving on the streets. You could see outdoor restaurants. You could see colorful awnings. You could see fruit stands and market areas. And it really was beginning to look like a city. And I did a little checking to see what kind of success stories we could find with the work that USAID and some of our organizations are providing to the area to see that commerce stand up and that sense of normalcy return. So let me tell you a quick little story, Mr. Speaker, and I think this is great.

We love success stories. We love it when we have someone who by their bootstraps pulls themselves up and realizes a wonderful dream of having a business or building a company. We as Americans love that entrepreneurial spirit. And I loved this story of Amhed who is in the Mansour neighborhood in Baghdad, and he was able to get a \$2,500 microgrant. Now, I know many of our constituents may have been reading in the paper about some of the microgrants and the microbusinesses that are going into Iraq and other countries also to help entrepreneurs start these businesses.

Well, Amhed used his grant to buy chest freezer shelves and an awning to open a store. And the store is now self-sufficient. It is supporting him and his family. He now is a merchant with his store, his produce store, on a corner there in the Mansour neighborhood in Baghdad. And it came about because there was a grant that helped him to get that store in place.

Now, this is important, Mr. Speaker, because you wouldn't go take out a loan and you wouldn't be approved for that loan if there was not the ability to put things in place and begin to see some success in that neighborhood.

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Well, we also have another one, a juice merchant, that used a USAID microfinance grant and opened a juice factory in Baghdad. There's lots of pomegranate juice and orange juice and the different juices they are beginning to manufacture and bottle and sell. This juice factory in Baghdad, with a microfinance grant from our USAID, has created 24 full-time jobs in Baghdad. That one little grant. And that gentleman is now making that juice. Of course, I said, well, I hope that Ahmed is one of the customers of the juice factory and selling that juice in his store on the corner, his produce store on the corner.

Now, I know that there are some who want to say that the security improvements aren't meaningful because we are not seeing enough political progress in Iraq. I will tell you that, and I think we all agree, that that political progress has not moved forward as quickly as we would like to. But we were reminded last week as we visited with Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus that the Washington clock and the Baghdad clock move at different speeds. You know, I guess that as impatient as many times as we are, we do have to realize this is a country that was under a dictator, a very brutal dictator for over three decades.

We are beginning to see some very encouraging signs of political progress, and I think this year is going to be a year when we see some more of that. Just over a week ago, the Iraqi Parliament did pass what was for them a very difficult law. They have taken a long time to look at de-Ba'athification reform, and that was passed. It has been difficult for them to address that central question of how the Iraqi people are going to deal with their past and with the legacy of Saddam Hussein.

The law has gone through their parliament, and it has passed. It was passed with Shiite sponsorship, which is significant. We have also seen some key Sunni political blocks return to parliament, to return to their work to be a part of the process.

Those are very encouraging steps. They are steps in the right direction. Certainly, the success of the surge has allowed the ability for this to take place. We have also seen the Iraqi Government has developed and is working on an ambitious budget. We are certainly hoping that they are going to do the same thing as they work through this current year. We have seen some encouraging signs of critical power sharing arrangements within the Iraqi Government. Their Prime Minister, Nouri Maliki, is apparently more willing to share power with the three-person presidency council, which represents each of the major sects in Iraq. So that is another sign that is very encouraging to us.

Anybody who is a serious and objective observer can say that the surge has worked. They admit that. We know that we are going to face more debate in the coming year over the length and nature and the size of our mission in Iraq. I would encourage all of my colleagues to take the success of the surge to heart and to be certain that they are not trying to snatch a defeat from the jaws of victory, but that they are being fair to our troops, that they are recognizing the success that these troops have given us in the surge, and that they are taking time to commend and thank the troops and the commanders that are on the ground.

I think it's fair to say, Mr. Speaker, that we all, I know I certainly appreciate those troops and their families, and I appreciate having the opportunity to support them and to let them know how much I appreciate having that opportunity to support them and also to honor them and to honor their families. My hope is that as we go through 2008 and as we look at our legislative agenda, Mr. Speaker, I hope that the work of this body will honor those men and women who honor us

every single day, who honor the legacy of freedom every single day by the way that they choose to carry out their job and by the way they choose to represent this great Nation.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. WYNN (at the request of Mr. HOYER) for today after 6 p.m.

Mr. BARTON of Texas (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today after 7 p.m. on account of attending a funeral.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. MCGOVERN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SPRATT, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. GINGREY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. ROHRBACHER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CONAWAY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BURTON of Indiana, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GINGREY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia, for 5 minutes, today.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 279, 110th Congress, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 8 o'clock and 20 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at 2 p.m.

EXPENDITURE REPORTS CONCERNING OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL

Reports concerning the foreign currencies and U.S. dollars utilized for Speaker-Authorized Official Travel during the fourth quarters of 2007 and the first quarter of 2008, pursuant to Public Law 95-384 are as follows:

REPORT OF EXPENDITURES FOR OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL, HON. FRANK R. WOLF, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, EXPENDED BETWEEN JAN. 1 AND JAN. 9, 2008

| Name of Member or employee | Date | | Country | Per diem ¹ | | Transportation | | Other purposes | | Total | |
|----------------------------|---------|-----------|---------------|-----------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|--|
| | Arrival | Departure | | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² | Foreign currency | U.S. dollar equivalent or U.S. currency ² |
| Hon. Frank R. Wolf | | 1/1 | United States | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/2 | Kuwait | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/2 | Iraq | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/3 | Kuwait | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/5 | Jordan | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/6 | Israel | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1/9 | United States | | | | | | | | |
| Committee total | | | | | \$ 2,550.00 | | 9,544.00 | | | | 12,094.00 |

¹ Per diem constitutes lodging and meals.
² If foreign currency is used, enter U.S. dollar equivalent; if U.S. currency is used, enter amount expended.
³ Total cost of all commercial flights.
⁴ Hotel bill paid directly from fund site.
⁵ Returned \$500.00 to U.S. Treasury via cashiers check.