

Vote Against the Republican Leadership's Iraq Resolution

For Immediate Release: June 16, 2006

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Rep. Rothman On His Vote Against the Republican Leadership's Iraq Resolution

"I voted against the Republican Leadership's Iraq resolution, which inaccurately describes the war in Iraq as part of the Global War on Terror. While I strongly and proudly support our courageous and dedicated troops, coalition partners, and the Iraqi Security Forces who put their lives on the line each and every day to fight for a democratic, stable and secure Iraq, I cannot support a resolution that does not paint an accurate picture of what the true situation on the ground is in Iraq.

"It is imperative that we acknowledge these realities: since we invaded Iraq in March 2003, more than 2,500 American servicemen and women have been killed in Iraq. 18,000 have been wounded. More than 100,000 innocent Iraqi civilians have lost their lives. Nearly \$350 billion of U.S. taxpayer dollars have been spent. Terrorist leader al-Zarqawi has been killed and Saddam Hussein is in prison, but the pacification and reconstruction of Iraq have been a failure. Every single fact that the president has offered to justify both the invasion of and the sustained U.S. military presence in Iraq has proven to be wrong. The President said that the war would be short-lived, aided by our allies, paid for by Iraqi oil, welcomed by the Iraqi people, and would result in a reconstructed Iraq with an improved quality of life for its citizens. His strategy in Iraq is not working and, as we have seen so many times, he and his Administration are incapable of admitting mistakes-even when those mistakes are irrefutable.

"This war has exhausted our military, hurt our war on terrorism, damaged our country's credibility internationally, and strained our economy. I strongly believe that the President's current "stay-the-course" plan in Iraq is not working. We need a new strategy. We need to take our troops out of Iraq.

"I strongly disagree with the assertion in this resolution that our continuing presence in Iraq is a vital part of fighting our war on terrorism. After all, the attacks on our troops in Iraq are not coming primarily from al-Qaeda. There are only approximately 1,000 al-Qaeda terrorists amidst the 26 million people of Iraq. The attacks on U.S. troops are planned by an insurgency that is comprised of native Iraqis. Once the American soldiers leave, we will remove the stimulus for the local Iraqi and worldwide incitement against America as an "occupier." We can continue to assist the Iraqi people in strengthening their fledgling democracy, but we must remove the provocation of an American military presence and instead, reinvest our resources in strengthening U.S. border and port security, defeating al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and elsewhere, and rebuilding our much-depleted U. S. military.

"For these reasons, I voted against the Republican Leadership's resolution on the war in Iraq and instead, support a new plan in Iraq that will bring our troops home."

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