

Transcript: Remarks on the House Floor about the Republican Leadership's Iraq Resolution

Rep. Rothman's Remarks on the War in Iraq

Excerpted from a transcript of June 15, 2006 debate over H.Res.861, the Republican Leadership's Iraq resolution:

Mr. MURTHA. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. Rothman).

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, how did this happen? We have lost 2,500 American servicemen and women. They have been killed in Iraq. 18,000 U.S. soldiers grievously wounded. We have spent over one-third of a trillion dollars in Iraq on this war, so far. Yet, 80 percent of the Iraqi people want us to leave. 80 percent of the Iraqi people want us to leave. They are shooting at our soldiers, blowing up our soldiers with improvised explosive devices.

How did we get here? Oh, yeah. I remember. President Bush said that Saddam Hussein was an imminent threat to the United States and had weapons of mass destruction. So many of us voted to send our troops to Iraq to eliminate this threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction and this imminent threat to our national security.

It turned out not to be true. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Saddam Hussein was no imminent threat to the United States. Well, we deposed him and that is a good thing. But there was a huge power vacuum and many of us felt, even though we were misled going into war, that we had a moral obligation to help the Iraqi people stabilize their country and bring democracy there, and we have been there now three years, 2,500 dead, 18,000 of our young men and women wounded, a third of \$1 trillion spent, and 80 percent of the Iraqis want us to leave.

I support the Murtha resolution, which says that we should withdraw most of the U.S. troops back to the United States and leave a quick reaction force in friendly countries around the region.

Some say Iraq is part of the war on terror. Nonsense. There are 25 million people in Iraq, 25 million people in Iraq, less than 1,000 foreign fighters. This is a civil war. The Iraqi Shiias, Sunnis, and Kurds cannot agree how to divide up Iraq now that we got rid of Saddam. Well, it is three years later. All of this American loss of life. President Bush says stay the course, and in fact, it will not be President Bush who gets rid of this war. It will be the next President. Well, you know what? Americans do not want this war without end. Deploy most of our troops back to America within six months. Redeploy a significant number in friendly countries around the horizon in case other countries want to meddle.

War without end is not the American way. We met our moral obligation to the people of Iraq. Now it is up to the Shiias, Sunnis, and Kurds in Iraq to decide whether they want to live in peace with one another or not.

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