

**Congressman Tim Murphy**  
**Floor Speech: Iraq War Resolution**  
**H. Con. Res. 63**  
**February 15, 2007**

Mr. Speaker, I want the American men and women serving in Iraq to come home. I want this war to end. I want the violence to stop. The injuries to stop, the deaths to stop. I also want terrorism to stop.

Over the last few weeks many of my constituents told me the same thing and their strong feelings in support of or against this resolution. I hear your concerns. No one can doubt your love of your country.

Like you I am deeply concerned about the direction of this war. Like you, armed with the knowledge of the present, the strategies of the past were too often incomplete, the intelligence was misinterpreted or inadequate.

The comments made here today on this resolution will be listened to by Iraqis, al Qaeda, and the soldiers in the field right now. The Marines who are now on the high seas headed there, and the thousands who are already there taking the offensive.

Here is my message to them.

The Arab countries told us that if we left now the results would be “catastrophic.” I want those Arab countries to press upon the Sunnis and Shias the absolute need to work for peace. I want the United States to actively engage in diplomatic efforts with all Arab nations. There is no more time to delay.

I want the Iraqi military to step up and take over combat operations, to be the tip of the spear and for our troops to shift our mission to training, and support.

I want to see the Iraqi government to stand strong, where every group feels respected and protected, and that they have a hopeful future. There is no time for delay.

I want Republicans and Democrats to sit down together and discuss how to make these things come to fruition. I want us to review the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraqi Study Group, to talk about which recommendations are worthy of implementation. I want us to thoughtfully, carefully and responsibly discuss not only what action we should take in Iraq, but to weigh the consequences of any action, and offer real ideas, real strategies and real solutions.

I want this Congress to support our soldiers. Every one of them. We value them, and pray for them and their families and will give them what they need to do their job. I want all of them to know that we will stand with them until the last one returns home.

I want them to know that policy comes before politics, and that no poll, no political plan, no political threats, should ever, ever, undermine our allegiance to doing what is right for our soldiers and our nation. I want them, to know that their work, their risks, their fighting, has meaning and purpose and must be immune to the politics of Washington.

I want the soldiers and airmen from the 171<sup>st</sup> and the 99<sup>th</sup> and the 911<sup>th</sup> in Pittsburgh, and our National Guard and reservists and active duty soldiers, sailors, airman and Marines to come home. I want their families to be able to embrace them, their children be tucked in at night by them and our towns to be able to show the affection of a grateful nation.

But while they are there, while they stand sentry with eyes on the horizon, ride in convoys, or walk on patrol, I want their minds on the critical task of that moment.

I spoke this week to the mother of a soldier who was just killed in Iraq. Sergeant Russell Kurtz. A finer and braver man you will not find. And I asked her what she thought about this discussion of sending more troops to Iraq. She said, "I'd rather have more troops there helping my son."

Dom DeFranco, the Pennsylvania Commander of the VFW, wrote in a letter to The Almanac newspaper:

To the Editor:

Men and women are risking their lives in the Middle East trying to restore peace to an oppressed population. Their military gear and encampment offer some protection, but the threat of life-changing physical and mental wounds is constant. So is the challenge to always be mission-ready, prepared to make life and death decisions in a split second. A grueling situation for sure.

However; even with their pride, honor and dedication motivating them patrol after patrol, bad morale—especially when fueled back home by demonstrations and political grandstanding—can bring down even the toughest warrior. As a Vietnam veteran, trust me—it cuts deep.

Regardless of where you stand on the current War on Terror (The Veterans of Foreign Wars does not take sides in debates about military action), troops get the message that they are wasting their time when politicians and citizens make headlines criticizing military action.

As the debate about the War on Terror continues, I urge citizens and politicians to stay focused on providing our troops with all of the combat equipment, supplies, and personnel they need to be the most effective fighting force possible. They also need our emotional support. Democracy affords politicians and citizens effective ways to debate policies without sending morale busting messages from the home front. Life on the front lines is tough enough without taking incoming salvos of negativity from back home.

Like you, I want our troops home as soon as possible. But as long as they are in harm's way, we should back them with the full resources of our nation—in material, personnel and supportive messages. Anything less will have a negative impact on their morale and possibly their safety.

Or listen to this comment from the American Legion regarding their unanimous support for the current action in Iraq, the increase in troops, and their caution on political rhetoric. “The men and women of The American Legion know firsthand about the uncertainty of war, which is why we support the steps that the nation’s commander in chief is taking to win the global war on terrorism, including his proposed troop surge in Iraq. Unlike the non-binding resolutions Congress is considering to repudiate the president’s strategy, The American Legion passed its own resolution to support winning the global war on terrorism.....Veterans of the Vietnam War remember what it was like to fight without the support of the people back home. .Legionnaires realize that not only was their service honorable, but their mission was too. You couldn’t separate the war from the warrior then, anymore than we can today.”

While our soldiers are there, I will support them with everything they need in terms of armor and ammunition, bullets and bread, weapons and words.

I will continue to work for all of these things, but for this point in time, while our soldiers are on the battlefield, I want to be able to look them in the eye and say I backed you up in your moment of battle.

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