

McGovern: Pull All Troops Out of Iraq

Rep. Jim McGovern (D-Mass.) gave this speech on the House Floor on July 11. It is also available as a video and press release on his website (<http://mcgovern.house.gov/>).

Mr. Speaker, I join today with Representatives Walter Jones and Barbara Lee to introduce a privileged resolution, H. Con. Res. 105, to direct the President to remove U.S. troops from Iraq within 30 days, or no later than the end of this year, except for those troops needed to protect U.S. diplomatic facilities and personnel.

We did this for a simple reason. Congress has the responsibility to authorize the introduction of American troops where hostilities are imminent. In less than 3 weeks, in three separate deployments, the U.S. has sent at least 775 additional troops to Iraq.

Now is the time for Congress to debate the merits of our military involvement in this latest Iraq conflict. Openly. Transparently. Do we approve of these deployments and any future escalation? If so, we should vote to authorize it. If we do not support it, then we should bring our troops back home.

It's that simple, Mr. Speaker. Congress has the responsibility to act on Iraq. Now.

Mr. Speaker, we did not introduce this privileged resolution lightly. By doing so, we have started a process to hold a debate on our engagement in Iraq later this month. We are using the special procedures outlined under the

War Powers Resolution. While this is an imperfect tool, it requires the House to take up this bill after 15 calendar days.

Like most of my colleagues, I would prefer for this House to bring up a bill authorizing our engagement in Iraq. And nothing in this resolution inhibits such important legislation from being drafted and brought before this House for debate and a clean up-or-down vote. Frankly, I wish that were happening. But I have not heard that such authorization is even under discussion, let alone being prepared for debate.

So, my colleagues and I are introducing this concurrent resolution because we strongly believe Congress has to step up to the plate and carry out its responsibilities when our servicemen and women are, once again, being sent into harms way.

The time for that debate is now.

Not when the first body bag comes home from Iraq.

Not when the first U.S. airstrikes or bombs fall on Iraq.

Not when we are embedded with Iraqi troops trying to take back an ISIS-held town.

And, worst case scenario, not when our troops are shooting their way out of an overtaken Baghdad.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is the time to debate our new en-



Rep. Jim McGovern introduces H. Con. Res. 105 on July 11, calling for removal of U.S. troops from Iraq.

agement in Iraq. Before the heat of the moment. When we can weigh the pros and cons of supporting the Maliki government, or whatever government is cobbled together should Maliki be forced to step down.

Now, before we are forced to take sides in a religious and sectarian war.

Now, before the next addition of more troops takes place—and make no mistake, I firmly believe we will continue to send more troops and more military assets into this crisis.

Now, Mr. Speaker, before we are forced to fire our first shots or drop our first bombs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is when the House should debate and vote on this very serious matter.

For those who say it is too early, too premature for this debate, I respectfully disagree. The longer we put off carrying out our Constitutional responsibilities, the easier it becomes to just drift along. This is what Congress has done over and over and it has to end, Mr. Speaker. Congress must speak, and Congress must act.

This resolution, should it pass the House, would direct the President to bring our troops home from Iraq within 30 days, or should that pose security questions, no later than by the end of this year, nearly 6 months

from now.

It would NOT require those troops that have been deployed to safeguard the security of our diplomatic facilities and personnel from withdrawing. They could remain and carry out their crucial roles of protecting our civilian personnel on-the-ground in Iraq.

This is why we need to take up this resolution later this month, debate our military engagement in this latest war in Iraq, and have a clean vote on this resolution, up-or-down, about whether we stay in Iraq or whether we bring our troops home.

We owe this much to our troops and their families.

We owe this much to the American people.

And we owe at least this much to our own democracy and democratic institutions that require Congress to be the final arbiter on whether our troops are sent into hostilities abroad.

I ask my colleagues to join Representatives Jones, Lee, and me as cosponsors of H. Con. Res. 105. I look forward to debating the merits of the Iraq war later this month and voting on whether our troops should stay or leave Iraq.

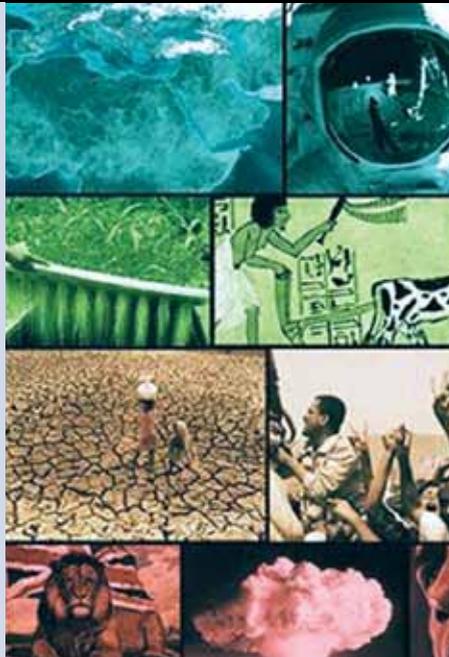
U.S. Reps. Walter Jones (R-NC) and Barbara Lee (D-CA) are co-sponsors of the bill.

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