

Additionally, just as the drumbeats began for the war in Iraq, so we are now hearing a ratcheting up of rhetoric against Iran. Just as was the case with Iraq, the US has dragged Iran before the Security Council. John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is widely quoted as having said "I don't think we have anything to say to the Iranians." Thus the cycle of dehumanization and isolation begins again. We implore you as citizens to inform yourselves, and to not again allow the starting of a conflict with a country that has not attacked us and is not an imminent threat.


Contact Congressman Bartlett at: <http://www.bartlett.house.gov/> (202) 225-2721; (888) 297-8006. Senator Mikulski: <http://www.mikulski.senate.gov/mailform.html> (202) 224-4654; Senator Sarbanes: <http://www.sarbanes.senate.gov/pages/email.htm> (202) 224-4524.

We honor, remember and mourn all those who have paid the greatest price with their lives, their suffering, and the lives of their loved ones, in this war. We pray for the wisdom to understand how the seeds of every conflict are planted, and to help our country make wiser decisions today, with policies and actions that will lead to a peaceful future.

For additional information:

On the cost of the Iraq War: National Priorities Project www.nationalpriorities.org
Information on issues facing troops: Operation Truth www.optruth.org
Casualty figures: Iraq Body Count www.iraqbodycount.net and www.icasualties.org,
www.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2003/iraq/forces/casualties/2005.09.html
Americans' Confidence in Future Of Iraq at New Low, Poll Shows—
(http://online.wsj.com/public/article/SB113234687823301680.html?mod=todays_free_feature)
Wall Street Journal Online. Two Retired Generals Call for Prompt Withdrawal from Iraq:
support Murtha Position (<http://www.armscontrolcenter.org/archives/002173.php>).
Statement by General William C. Odom, head of the National Security Agency during the Reagan
administration (http://niemanwatchdog.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=ask_this.view&askthisid=129)
Full text of Congressman Murtha's speech.
(<http://www.dccc.org/stakeholder/archives/003914.html>) Details on the "Homeward Bound" Act :
(<http://capwiz.com/pdamerica/issues/bills/?bill=8087711>) Where is the Iraq war headed next?",
The New Yorker (http://www.newyorker.com/fact/content/articles/051205fa_fact#top)

Alternatives to violent conflict: American Friends Service Committee www.afsc.org ; Friends
Committee on National Legislation www.fncl.org, for STEP, A Sensible Transition to Enduring
Peace resolution; Fellowship of Reconciliation; www.forusa.org; www.thinkpeace.net;

 All around the world, Women In Black stand in silent vigil, wearing black as a symbol of mourning, for the ravages of war and violence. WIB is an international grassroots women's peace advocacy network, present in 40 countries, and in 38 US states. Our vigils are a public statement that violence and oppression, under any label, are unacceptable. **Vigil Schedule:** All are welcome; please wear black. Third Wednesdays, intersection of Market and Patrick Streets in Frederick from 6:30 – 7 pm, and first Fridays 12 - 12:30 pm, at War Memorial Park, W 2d and N. Bentz Streets. For more information about Women in Black Frederick, MD. see www.wibfrederick.org Email: info@wibfrederick.org or call 301/834-7581

**THREE YEARS SINCE THE START OF HOSTILITIES IN IRAQ,
MARCH 19, 2003**

**COUNTING THE COST OF WAR:
2311 LIVES TOO MANY
\$319 BILLION TOO MUCH**



We mourn the tragic loss of life this war has brought us
We grieve for our dead servicemen and women
We grieve for the dead Iraqi men, women and children
We grieve for those lives shattered by wounds, seen and unseen
We honor those lives, and those sacrifices
The human cost of the Iraq War grows every day
How many more will there be before this war ends, before Iraqis
and American soldiers are out of harm's way?

**October 25, 2005: 2000th U.S. soldier was killed;
141 days later: 2311 are dead**

206 troop deaths from other coalition countries

At least 17,004 U.S. troops wounded in action, not including wounds from non-hostile actions, or psychological disabilities, estimated to impact 17% of all returning troops. Some estimates list wounded at 48,100

Iraqi Civilian dead: Est. to be at least 100,000

Cost to U.S. Taxpayers to date: \$247,490,500,000 and counting, with a pending request for an additional \$72.4 billion in supplemental funding

Cost to Frederick County Taxpayers: more than \$56 million

Taxpayers in Maryland will pay \$6.2 billion for the cost of war in Iraq. For the same amount of money, the following could have been provided:

864,147 People Receiving Health Care or	99,047 Elementary School Teachers or
817,128 Head Start Places for Children or	2,080,984 Children Receiving Health Care or
46,107 Affordable Housing Units or	733 New Elementary Schools or
922,825 Scholarships for University Students or	104,764 Music and Arts Teachers or
132,562 Public Safety Officers or	10,318,068 Homes with Renewable Electricity or
106,912 Port Container Inspectors	

The money spent on Iraq could have bailed out the Social Security System until the year 2070, and provided healthcare for 72 million Americans, resolving the health care crisis. The devastation of hurricane Katrina has shown us how vulnerable the poor in America are, and how desperately our infrastructure. Imagine how spending \$319 billion dollars to revitalize our communities would also have strengthened our economy – and our security. *Why can we always find the money to support death – but not to enrich our lives?*

The war in Iraq has also sapped our national strength in other ways. It has polarized us as a people. The atrocities perpetrated by Americans and American policy at Abu Ghraib and now, Guantanamo, have shamed us in the eyes of the world and in our own eyes. It has weakened our moral authority and our ability to deal with human rights abuses in other parts of the world.

As Citizens We Must Stay Engaged

Three years after the U.S. dropped the first bombs in Iraq the fighting continues with no end in sight and great suffering on all sides. The human and financial costs of this war are staggering. It has put our military in an untenable position, in addition to the cost in lives and tax dollars not available for critical needs elsewhere. Every day brings the revelation of fresh horrors. Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, recently said the invasion had opened a “Pandora’s Box” of tribal and religious fissures that threaten to devour the region. Even as he desperately urges a government of national unity, the questions grow louder: Can civil war be averted? The Iraqi people lived under an unspeakably brutal regime. But they were not asked whether they would choose their current reality instead. The U.S. chose this war with limited international support, without serious consideration of non-military options, and for stated reasons that have proven to be unfounded. The results have been tragic and disastrous for all.

But, whether or not they initially supported the war, a recent Gallup poll says that more than 65% of Americans now join politicians on both sides of the aisle and high-ranking members of the military calling for a full or partial withdrawal. A Zogby poll says 72% of U.S. military serving in Iraq favor withdrawal. Most Americans share a belief that our continued occupation of Iraq is fueling the insurgency and that we need a better plan to disengage. Additionally, in a 2005 survey commissioned by the British military, 82% of Iraqis stated they “strongly oppose” the continued presence of coalition troops. ***WIB Frederick calls for citizens to hold our President and the Congress accountable for the policies and actions that have brought the U.S., Iraq and the world to this place. We believe it is our obligation to stay informed and to speak out. We are outraged at the shabby treatment our returning veterans are receiving in terms of adequate medical and financial benefits and ongoing care. We ask you to also be outraged. We oppose continued funding of this war.*** We hold up the prayer that our country will join together to mourn, and to heal by working for justice for those many among us who have been so neglected by our current national priorities.

There were other options in 2003, and there are now. While there are no easy answers or easy outs, a different vision for moving forward *is* possible. There *are* proposals for developing a plan to withdraw militarily, and help the Iraqi people rebuild their nation with broad international support. Decorated Marine Veteran, Congressman John Murtha has called for a plan to withdraw as soon as is feasible. On November 15, 2005 the Senate passed a bill, 79 to 16, asking the President for a transition plan in 2006. House Joint Resolution 55, the “Homeward Bound” resolution, would have Congress insist that the administration create a plan to withdraw from Iraq, and to have that withdrawal begin next year. There are also a number of other bills currently before Congress that address these concerns. However we each view the war, it is vitally important to our country to be engaged, and to raise our voices.