

**Prepared Floor Remarks of Congressman Robert C. “Bobby” Scott**  
**H. Res. 861, Iraq Resolution**  
**June 15, 2006**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the resolution on the Iraq War.

Mr. Speaker, as we discuss what to do now, we must first acknowledge the fact that we cannot discuss an exit strategy for leaving Iraq without first stating what the entry strategy was, and then stating what we are trying to accomplish now. We were originally told that we invaded Iraq because they had weapons of mass destruction; that turned out not to be true. We were then told we invaded Iraq because the Iraqi leaders were connected with the 9/11 attacks; that turned out not to be true. The rationale that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the United States was exposed as untrue even before the invasion. A letter from the Director of the CIA to the Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, dated October 7, 2002, specifically stated that the CIA believed that Iraq and Saddam Hussein did not pose a terrorist threat to the United States, and would not be expected to pose such a threat, unless we attacked Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, after it became clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction, that Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11, and that Iraq posed no terrorist threat to the United States, we have been subjected to the excuse of the week for being in Iraq. We were told that we needed to capture Saddam Hussein for our safety. He has been in jail for over a year, and yet we are still in Iraq. Then the rationale changed and we were told we needed to capture Al-Zarqawi. We did that, and yet we are still in Iraq, with no apparent plans to leave. The rationale for this week is that we are still in Iraq in order to establish a democracy. But we have to recognize that the nature of a democracy is that it cannot be imposed on anyone. Further, if the purpose is to establish democracy in Iraq, it is ironic that the citizens right here in Washington, D.C., cannot elect a representative to vote on this very resolution.

Mr. Speaker, the simple fact is that we made a mistake, and the only sensible rationale for still being in Iraq is because we made a mess, and we have a moral responsibility to help clean up that mess. And so we have to acknowledge that we are in a quagmire, and it will become clear that there are no good results that can occur. Cut and run – bad result. Stay the course to prove we have resolve – bad result. Don’t worry, be happy – bad result. Continue to pretend that success is around the corner – bad result.

I do not use the word quagmire lightly. This Administration’s poor planning has strained our troops, with many units on their second and third tours. Attacks on U.S. forces are increasing, not decreasing. During the course of our occupation, the number of insurgents has dramatically increased, and our presence in Iraq has been counter productive, just as the CIA predicted. As of today, 2,500 U.S. service members have been killed and many more wounded. Our military equipment is wearing out much faster than normal. Emergency reserve stocks have been stripped. We have endured the embarrassment of torture at Abu Graib prison and questionable detention policies at Guantanamo Bay. And we have not begun to effectively deal with the issue of corruption in private contracts. Despite spending billions of dollars on

electricity and reconstruction, over half of Iraqi households lack access to clean water and 85% lack reliable electricity.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be reminded that when we first invaded Iraq, the Administration instructed the Budget Committee not to even budget for the war because it would cost so little. But now we have appropriated almost \$400 billion, not including future medical costs for injured troops. This has to be compared with the \$7.4 billion that it cost us to defeat Iraq in the Persian Gulf War.

Meanwhile, we have problems at home. There are shortfalls in the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, cuts in first responder grants, only 5% of containers entering our ports are being screened, and the Administration has failed to adequately implement the 9/11 Commission's recommendations.

Mr. Speaker, we are not more secure. We are less secure as a result of the war. Many experts have concluded that the military has done as much as it can, and so our exit strategy must include the use of diplomacy and politics, using the lessons we have learned from our mistakes.

But today, instead of honestly assessing what we are going to do in Iraq, we are considering this resolution, which repeats all of the disparaged reasons for the invasion and proclaims that its success, not a civil war, is just around the corner, and that we should follow the strategy of don't worry, be happy. In contrast, any real debate would have to start with an honest assessment of our situation. But without articulating why we invaded in the first place, and what we want to accomplish now that we are there, we cannot have an exit strategy. There can be no coherent discussion of an exit strategy while we are directed by this resolution to accept the smiling face, don't worry, be happy description of our situation in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, we should defeat the resolution.