

While I support the efforts of Democratic leadership to fund vital programs like the Veterans Administration and health care for our serving military, I cannot support the FY08 Defense Appropriations bill. This final draft provides too much money for the wrong priorities and enables the administration to continue its tragically misguided Iraq policy.

I made a pledge to vote against any further funding for the Iraq war unless it is used for immediate troop redeployment. I will honor this pledge and I will continue to fight against funding for major weapons systems that have little to do with current security threats.

Programs like the Future Combat System's fighting vehicles and the National Missile Defense system would be justifiable if the major threat to our security was a modern version of the Soviet Union. It is not. I applaud the Democratic cuts to the funding levels requested by the President, though we must do better.

Continuing to pour billions of dollars into these programs is a waste of money and a threat to our readiness. We must invest in personnel and systems that confront the real and looming threats of terrorists and rogue states.

This bill contains glimmers of hope that we are moving in the right direction on defense spending. But I will not vote for a bill that funds a Cold War-era military and approves any additional funding for the war in Iraq.