

Portland, OR – Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore) released the following statement in response to the testimony General David Petraeus delivered on the Iraq War:

“Before General Petraeus ever started his briefing, the facts were clear and the sides were drawn. Petraeus, who has a record of being a good soldier, but a poor predictor and even worse political prop, today made an entirely predictable assessment that the surge has made some progress. He does not recommend scaling down US involvement in Iraq beyond pre-surge levels for the foreseeable future, citing all sorts of evidence that is contradicted by every independent analysis of the situation.

“There is no meaningful political progress; levels of violence in Iraq remain unacceptably high; and Iraqis feel no safer or optimistic about the future. In fact, polls show that 70% of Iraqis believe security has deteriorated in the area experiencing the US military ‘surge.’ Almost 60% say it is acceptable to attack American soldiers.

“Petraeus and the Bush administration continue to stretch the truth. Any reasonable assessment of the totality of the situation is that it is bad, it may be getting worse, and there's no evidence that the current level of US soldiers - or even more - will make any appreciable difference over the long term. Of course the thousands of extra troops in particular areas have had some limited impact, yet there has been no progress in the underlying political situation, and no reason to believe than even limited security improvements can continue once the unsustainable surge comes to an end.

“There are some who suggest that there are glimmers of hope and we ought to continue enhanced levels of American involvement because the alternative is going to lead to bloodshed. What the evidence suggests, and every independent expert reinforces, is that whether we began a withdrawal in five days, five weeks, five months, or five years, there will be far more bloodshed,. Indeed, this Administration has led us into a war with no good end in sight.

“Almost two years ago I offered a comprehensive approach to securing the peace in Iraq. It was to begin with the withdrawal of troops. It was to engage in diplomatic action. It was to put pressure on the Iraqis themselves to start engaging. It was to rely less on the military and more on multinational organizations, diplomacy, and job creation.

“Since then, I have introduced legislation to deal meaningfully with tens of thousands of Iraqi refugees whose lives and families are at risk because they trusted us. This is not just a moral obligation we have – to help those who have helped us – but it is part of a solution to stabilize a potentially dangerous situation in a region that is absorbing a surge of Iraqi refugees.

“This is a very grave and sad state of affairs. Hearing the same talk and seeing the same approach year after year from this misguided administration is unacceptable. Today General Petraeus continued the pattern and offered the same old thing. I, like most Americans and Iraqis, recognize that is past the hour to start being honest and realistic. It is time for us to begin withdrawing our brave troops.”