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Congressman Blumenauer was an early and staunch opponent of the Iraq War and does not believe a military escalation is the right solution for a safer America and a more stable and prosperous Afghanistan.

Blumenauer voted against the Authorization for the Use of Military Force in Iraq and worked to block the war by prolonging and strengthening weapons inspections. Since 2003, he voted against measures that allowed for open-ended funding in Iraq and the military escalation in Afghanistan. The Congressman is also a recognized as a leader for his work to [help the 4 million Iraqis who were displaced](#) as a result of the war in Iraq.

Congressman Blumenauer is deeply grateful to all who serve in our armed forces, particularly the Oregon National Guard, who have served courageously in Iraq and continue to do so in Afghanistan. Blumenauer's number one priority is the well being of the men and women who serve our country.

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A Way Forward in Afghanistan

Congressman Blumenauer supported the initial resolution that authorized force in Afghanistan by the United States in 2001. This decision was made in response to the horrendous attacks on American soil, orchestrated from a safe haven provided by Taliban leadership.

This necessary and strategic action was undermined by the Bush administration's appalling and abrupt shift in focus to Iraq, leaving the mission in Afghanistan under-funded and without clear goals.

Blumenauer welcomed President Obama's thorough review of U.S. policy in Afghanistan, but strongly opposed the tripling of forces in the region, resulting in nearly 140,000 foreign troops on the ground and an \$8 billion per-month price tag for the US taxpayers at home. The Congressman has made clear that we should accelerate the President's proposal to begin transferring forces out of Afghanistan in July of 2011. Blumenauer is a cosponsor of The Responsible End to the War in Afghanistan Act, which would prohibit funds for operations in Afghanistan except for the use of a safe and orderly withdrawal of all U.S. military personnel and defense contractors.

Military efforts do little to address the Afghan people's grievances over their exclusion from the political process and do little for long-term stability throughout the region.

Instead of focusing resources on a military build-up, Blumenauer believes that we should focus on civilian efforts, working with Afghans to strengthen their ability to govern, support civil society, fight corruption, and help to rebuild their country.

Without a concerted effort, it will be impossible to affect change when corruption is rife within the Afghan government at the highest levels, fostering a booming narcotics industry and aggravating tribal and ethnic rivalries. These factors, compounded by the economic downturn, have made it clear to Blumenauer that we should be working to scale back the United States and NATO presence while we work with Afghanistan to strengthen their ability to govern. The United States and international donors simply cannot afford to bankroll 70% of Afghanistan's budget.

Congressman Blumenauer knows that there are no shortcuts to peace, stability, economic growth, and environmental protection. It grows clearer by the day that the more heavy-handed we are and the stronger our military presence in Afghanistan, the more we unify threats against our troops, the United States, and our allies.

Ending the War in Iraq

Congressman Blumenauer is committed to responsibly ending the US military involvement in Iraq, a foreign policy decision that he has opposed since day one. He welcomed President Obama's remarks, stating that, "the American combat mission in Iraq has ended. Operation Iraqi Freedom is over, and the Iraqi people now have lead responsibility for the security of their country."

As a result of this Security Agreement, the US must withdraw all troops from Iraq by the end of 2011. Blumenauer fully supports this accelerated timetable for withdrawal.

The remaining US troops in the region are designated as "advise and consent" brigades, focused largely on training Iraqi security forces as opposed to their previous role as combat troops.