

Washington, DC — Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) will offer two amendments to the administration's Iraq Supplemental request, H.R. 3289.

The first of these amendments would strike the Department of Defense from the list of entities eligible to be apportioned funds from the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund. This will allow existing agencies that already have the capacity and expertise in reconstruction to lead these efforts in Iraq. The second would shift \$500 million from the Iraq Relief and Reconstruction Fund to rebuilding and assistance efforts in Afghanistan.

In response to the administration's proposed request for appropriated funds to be left primarily in the hands of the Department of Defense, Congressman Blumenauer released the following statement:

"It was wrong to give this administration a blank check to wage unilateral war and it is wrong to give the Department of Defense a blank check to rebuild Iraq. The role of assistance and rebuilding is best handled by the departments and agencies, namely the State Department and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), that have the expertise and capacity to do so."

In addition to clarifying those responsible for handling reconstruction funds, Congressman Blumenauer calls upon the administration to provide a better balance of the money appropriated between Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. Blumenauer argues:

"There is an incredible disparity between security and reconstruction funding between Iraq and Afghanistan. They have similar populations, Afghanistan covers a greater territory, and Afghanistan is harboring terrorists. We have clearly not met our objectives in this country and this amendment attempts to ensure that we do not lose focus on important foreign policy objectives in the Middle East and beyond."