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Washington, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-5) delivered the following statement on the partisan House Resolution on the War in Iraq from the floor of the House. Her disappointment in today's debate stems from her consistent calls for an open debate on the United States' policy towards Iraq, which began last year.

The Congresswoman saw today as an opportunity to debate the different proposals to address Iraq, like House Concurrent Resolution 348, which she supports. This resolution would tie troop redeployment to Iraq's political process, stating that the redeployment should begin as soon as practically possible after the completion of the Iraqi constitution-making process (slated for August 2006) or September 30, 2006, whichever comes first. Additionally, it clearly states U.S. policy to not control the flow of Iraqi oil nor maintain permanent military bases in Iraq.

[\(Click here to watch Congresswoman Matsui's floor statement on Iraq.\)](#)

“Mr. Speaker, today’s debate is long overdue. For the past three years, the U.S. has had a military presence in Iraq. In fact, when the authorization for the War in Iraq was authorized, I was not a member of this House. Yet this is the first extensive public debate Congress will have held on the most important issue of the day in three years.

“Even now, however, the rule put forth by the House leadership asks members a simplistic question: Do you accept or renounce the president’s vague appeal to “stay the course” and “be patient.” Such a narrow focus does a disservice to our role as representatives of the people.

“The American people want to hear practical, well thought out ideas from their elected representatives. Today we could have had that honest, engaged, and realistic debate.

“I had hoped to discuss the reality of Iraq right now, and how we may best help a political solution to emerge.

“This isn’t a debate we should be afraid of. We can have this debate and can have it respectfully. But the House Republican leadership has decided to pass on this opportunity.

“What should we be debating?

“I believe that there are several things upon which all members can agree, Republican and Democrat alike. The first is that the U.S. has no desire to control Iraq’s oil supply. The second is that we will not build permanent bases in Iraq.

“Taken together, these statements say clearly to the Iraqi people that the U.S. presence in Iraq is not permanent. And it says clearly to the Administration that our strategy in Iraq must reflect the fact that we will not be there forever.

“But Mr. Speaker, the focus of this House must move beyond these specific details and rapidly toward our broader policies on Iraq.

“We all want a free, stable, and prosperous Iraq. And we have an important diplomatic role to play. But ultimately, it is up to Iraqis to achieve those goals, through the political process.

“The U.S. should continue to offer support for Iraq’s security forces. And regardless of our troop deployment, the U.S. must maintain its responsibility to assist in rebuilding the country’s economy and

infrastructure.

“But beginning to drawdown troops stationed in Iraq can be done while keeping all of these goals in mind. I support and respect several redeployment proposals put forth by members of this body for those reasons.

“The president’s exhortations to “stay the course” remain disconnected from the reality on the ground and from a sincere engagement in the policy details.

“In contrast, the proposals put forth by several members of the House were developed after much thought. The Members struggled to mold the chaos in Iraq into a workable solution that upholds the best interests of the Iraqi people and of the American people.

“These proposals and ideas deserve to come to the floor. They deserve to be debated. And they deserve a vote.

“Unfortunately, under the Rule reported out, this will not happen. Instead we will have a gripping session that yields no results. Congress is part of this government. In fulfillment of its responsibilities, this House should reject this rule and bring real policy to the floor.”

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