

Mahoney Speaks on Need for Accountability in War Funding

Statement of Congressman Tim Mahoney

H.Res.97 - Providing for Operation Iraqi Freedom cost accountability.

I thank the distinguished gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of Florida's 16th Congressional District in support of H.Res.97, providing cost accountability for the Iraq War.

We have rid Iraq of a brutal dictator, given the Iraqi people a chance to create their own democracy, and invested over \$400 billion dollars and more than 3,000 American lives in securing their country.

It is time for the Iraqis to step up and take control of their own security.

And it is imperative that any future American financial expenditures on the Iraq War be subject to accountability and transparency.

An estimated \$9 billion dollars of Iraq reconstruction funds are missing.

According to a January 2005 report by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, these \$9 billion dollars have gone missing because of inefficiencies and bad management.

For the past four years, Congress has not exercised the oversight and accountability necessary to ensure that our money is being used effectively to support our troops and achieve our objectives in Iraq.

We have paid billions of dollars to private contractors for work in Iraq at the same time that reports have uncovered waste, fraud, abuse, and even possible war profiteering by some of these contractors.

In a war already lacking the manpower, resources, and international support needed to maximize our chance of success, it is criminal that billions of dollars are unaccounted for.

Congressional oversight is needed to make sure that our money is used to support our troops, not lost to profiteering and fraud.

H.Res.97 would require that future Iraq spending is marked by transparency and accountability instead of systemic waste, fraud, and abuse.

The resolution calls for the creation of a Truman Commission to investigate how contracts are awarded; increases transparency so we know how Iraq War funds are spent; demands that fiscal requests for FY08 and later go through the normal appropriations process instead of emergency supplementals, and calls for resources to be used to improve Iraqi assumption of policing operations.

Mr. Speaker, these criteria are long overdue. I encourage my colleagues to support H.Res.97 to ensure that transparency and accountability are the hallmarks of any future funding of the Iraq War.

I yield back the balance of my time.