

# Predictions vs. Reality in Iraq

By Rep. Ron Paul

**23/09/08 ---** - On September 10, 2002 I asked 35 questions regarding war with Iraq. The war resolution passed on October 16, 2002. Now today, as some of my colleagues try to reestablish credentials regarding spending restraint, I want to call attention to my 18th question from six years ago:

“Are we willing to bear the economic burden of a 100 billion dollar war against Iraq, with oil prices expected to skyrocket and further rattle an already shaky American economy? How about an estimated 30 year occupation of Iraq that some have deemed necessary to "build democracy" there?”

Many scoffed at my “radical” predictions at the time, regarding them as hyperbole. Six years later, I am forced to admit that I was wrong. My “radical” predictions were in fact, not “radical” enough.

I warned of a draining 30-year occupation. Now, politicians glibly talk about a 100-year occupation as if it is no big deal. On cost, according to estimates from the Congressional Research Service, we have already burned through around \$550 billion in Iraq, at a rate of about \$2 billion per week. Economist Joseph Stiglitz’s estimates are even higher, at \$12 billion a month. It is a total price tag quickly heading into the trillions, if we don’t stop bombing and rebuilding bridges in Iraq that lead us nowhere but bankruptcy! Bridges in this country are crumbling along with our economy, while some howl about earmarks. Earmarks are a drop in the bucket compared to war and occupation.

Yes, I was wrong about Iraq. I knew it would be bad. I didn’t know it would be this bad.

The American people deserve better. Being asked to endorse such a farce is beyond insulting. Clearly, the rosy predictions of the neo-Conservatives from before the war are not coming true. Far from it! With a straight face, one official estimated the TOTAL cost of reconstruction in Iraq would be just \$1.7 billion. Turns out that we spend more than that in ONE WEEK. Our friends are not pitching in to cover the cost. Expenses are not being covered by oil from a grateful and liberated Iraqi people. Rather, big corporate interests are benefitting, the price of oil has more than quadrupled, and the American economy is on its knees and sinking fast.

No one predicted the exact course of this war before it started. But to continue to listen to the foreign policy advice of those that were the MOST offbase will only lead to more foreign policy disasters. We need to keep this in mind as we think about Russia, Iran, Cuba and other countries. Keep in mind - the doomsday predictions on the Iraq War from six years ago, sound like a cakewalk today. While what leaders in the administration had predicted, reads like a fairytale. Ask yourself, when listening to the same foreign policy “experts” explaining situations around the world and suggesting policy positions: In light of the facts of today, and the predictions of yesterday, how expert have they shown themselves to be?

Passing HR 2605 to sunset authorization for the use of force in Iraq is the first step to stopping this bloody war, and the consequent bleeding of our treasuries. Serious fiscal conservatives will support it, as will those who have been paying attention to foreign policy predictions and reality.

*Ron Paul (born August 20, 1935) is a Republican United States Congressman from Lake Jackson, Texas, a physician, a bestselling author, and the last major Republican candidate to withdraw from the 2008 U.S. presidential election.*