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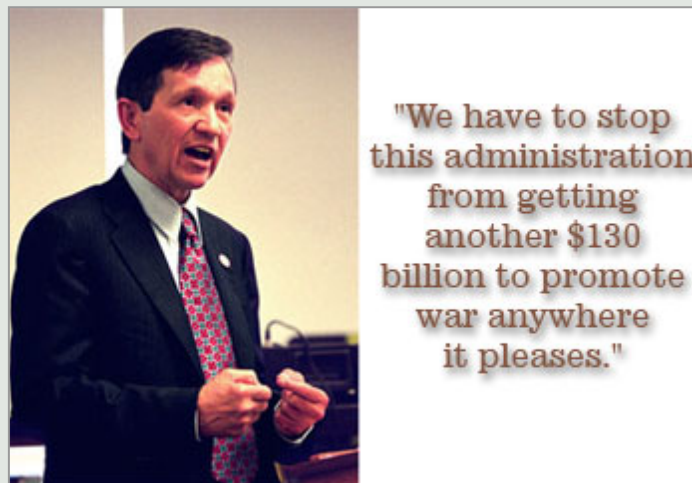
Rep. Dennis Kucinich: No More Money for War on Iraq

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Posted on Dec 4, 2006

By Joshua Scheer

In an interview with Truthdig's Joshua Scheer*, the Democratic congressman argues that the Pentagon's new spending proposal would not only escalate the Iraq war but could be used to fund an attack on Iran.



AP

Rep. Dennis Kucinich

Truthdig: Can you tell us about the Department of Defense's new appropriation requests for the Iraq war?

Kucinich: Well, here's what's happening. The Congress appropriated \$70 billion in so-called bridge funds for the Iraq war. Those funds began to be spent as of October 1st, 2006. Those funds will last until at least the end of June 2007. Keep in mind [that] all of last year when the war was sharply escalated, the Department of Defense spent \$117 billion in Iraq. They're coming in with a **request for close to \$130 billion** (also **here**) in the spring for a supplemental appropriation. Now that means in a single year the costs of the war could go up to \$200 billion, but they're not saying what the money is used for specifically.... When you read the **[Gordon] England memo** very carefully you see that it basically expands the definition of what this \$130 billion can be used for.

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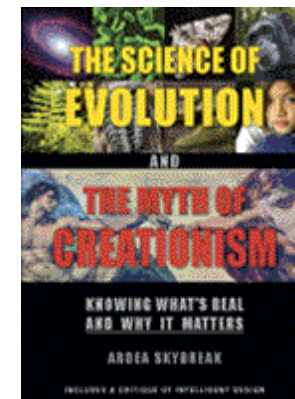
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Rep. Dennis Kucinich: No More Money for War on Iraq

This ought to be of concern to everyone because this could be used for continuing the war, expanding the war in Iraq. When you look at the **England memo** you see that they're talking about costs to accelerate specific force capabilities necessary to prosecute the war. But because it is not specific—and think about a \$130-billion appropriation that is not specific!— this could be used to fund a potential attack on Iran. This \$130 billion could also be part of a slush fund for an expansion of military spending and essentially taking it off budget.

What we have here is a situation that is totally out of control. Not only does the administration feel unrestrained in [its] spending, but they also apparently feel unrestrained by the mandate which the American people gave the Democrats on November 7th. The Democrats in Congress have a moral obligation to take a new direction with respect to Iraq, and that direction is out. The administration is borrowing money to fund this war. This administration has not shown any willingness to suffer any kind of oversight on the spending, but the ultimate oversight is when the bill is up for passage.

Truthdig: There are some in the Pentagon who are concerned and have sent this back to try to get a handle on what exactly they want to spend the money on, so this seems to not just be a concern of Democrats but even some in the Pentagon....

This administration has not shown any willingness to suffer any kind of oversight on the spending, but the ultimate oversight is when the bill is up for passage.

the most high-tech equipment, with the \$70 billion already there....

Kucinich: What it means is that anything goes, every wish list that ever existed at the

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Pentagon is being dusted off and used under the cover of the Iraq war, but they're expanding it. They're saying it's for the global war on terror. The global war on terror has become a license for the Bush administration to attack anyone anywhere, and there's no accountability. The special inspector general for Iraq recently notified Congress that the United States sent 370,000 weapons over to Iraq but only recorded the serial numbers of 10,000 of those weapons. So what do you suppose that means? That means that with no accountability on weapons these weapons can go into anybody's hands and no one will ever be able to trace it, because the serial numbers have not been recorded. This special inspector general **has called corruption the second insurgency.**

Whether it's \$130 billion or \$30 billion, we are going to have to put an end to the funding of this Iraq war. That's the only way it's going to end. There is no other way. This is up to Congress now. This is not about George Bush anymore. The president has already made clear his intentions: **He's going to keep the troops there** until the end of his term and it does not matter what that Iraq study group says. Everyone who knows anything understands that was just put out there to buy him some time, but Congress has a specific directive here from the American people as a result of the November 7th election, so the spring will tell the story of the next two years. It will tell if the Democrats are going to rescue the nation from a deepening war in Iraq, or whether we are going to permit the administration to carry the war through the end of [Bush's] term.... You can't simultaneously say you oppose the war and vote for the funding, and you can't maintain [that] this is for the troops in the field when the money is there now to bring the troops home. So the moment of truth is fast approaching.

Truthdig: There is money, right? At least \$70 billion from the budget. This money you are talking about, it is supplemental to that....

Kucinich: The money's there to bring the troops home and that money is continued in the so-called bridge fund that was passed September 30th, 2006. We have the money to bring the troops home. The idea that the troops will be stranded is false and is being spread by people who want to keep the war and the war spending going.


Congress has to recognize that the American people took a stand in November. What could be more profound than changing the entire Congress, the House and the Senate, over the issue of the war? Is there anybody out there who could argue that the American people asked for more money for Iraq? That the American people asked for more troops for Iraq? Did the American people ask to prolong or intensify the war in Iraq? None of those things are true. What the American people want is to get out of Iraq. The test is going to be on this bill. The vote on this bill is going to be the moment of truth.

Truthdig: I wanted to get a quick comment on Silvestre Reyes, the new head of the [House] Intelligence Committee. Do you think he is a good choice?

Kucinich: I think he's a good choice. He and I came into Congress together. I know him



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well. He's solid [and] thoughtful. He did vote against the war. [He's] someone who has worked on border issues --- I think that's important. He's a good man and I think he's a good choice.

Truthdig: There are some concerns over [his] lack of experience versus Jane Harman, the outgoing minority chair. But he has been on the Intelligence Committee for a while....

Kucinich: He'll have a lot of help.

*Interviewer Scheer worked as an entry-level staffer on Kucinich's state Senate campaign and was later a summer associate in his congressional office. In this weekly interview series, Rep. Kucinich gives his take on the goings-on in Congress in the wake of the Democrats' victory.

1

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Comments: 9 Published. Add Yours

- **Comment #40871 by Barry on 12/05 at 12:07 pm**

Ah, Kellina, what ARE you smoking? Comment #40824

First, his name is spelled "Dennis".

Second, he's not a Senator, so noting he voted with "all 99 other Senators" is nonsense.

Third, when the House voted on HR 2863, the Defense Appropriations bill to which you apparently refer, the Roll Call vote was 398-19 to pass it. Dennis Kucinich was one of the 19 "nay" votes.

So, you can't spell, posted ignorantly, and took an unwarranted cheap-shot lie to smear a decent man, then name-called the reporter.

Go away, little nasty. You've proven yourself publicly to be unworthy of posting opinions here.

- **Comment #40855 by Kellina on 12/05 at 9:44 am**

Sorry Joshua, for calling you a fawning sycophant. Dennis K. was in the House prior to the last election, so he could not have voted with the other senators for the half trillion dollar defense budget.

I sincerely apologize and hope that Dennis K can do what he says. I read up a bit more about him and he looks like the real deal.

Take care,
Kellina

- **Comment #40833 by NO money = no wars! on 12/05 at 8:21 am**

Sorry YOU can't buy the "doggie" in the window, it cost money that I will not give you!

History will show YOU that all wars have ended by cutting the funds, literally. NO money = no wars!

I traveled within the USA this summer supporting many MOMS / DADS in their campaigns efforts for their local state senators running.

The American people have literally reached a point of physically taking it upon themselves to demand George leave office!

They have had enough of:

Dirty Crooks (some still need JAIL) sitting in Congress w/ a DO NOTHING for the middle class attitude, just (me, me and me = republicans),

The Endless Iraq "occupation" showing NO Progress, just MORE Dead Bodies no matter, which way your head turned, (and I have 1 damaged eye)

The Financial "RAPE" of all families and students over the past 6 years. This is criminal neglect by our so called "leadership"! <cough, cough>
Talk about abuse. (Emphasis added)

I literally, got my ears filled from regular moms and dads! If you folks ever read my note sheets (189 pages of quotes from regular families) from x different states this would "shock you all".

All the best,
Most Sincerely,
Concerned Mother

p.s. > Hillary stated "vote for change," she did NOT "get it" either. Further, she will endure logic issues "owning" her continued support for these wars (Afghanistan and Iraq) all directly related to her husbands foreign actions in dec 2000!

Sorry, but I call it just like reading a xxxxx!

• **Comment #40831 by sharon ash on 12/05 at 7:57 am**

"The sinews of war, unlimited money." Cicero If Congress will not stop funding this illegal war, then stop funding Congress. Visit <http://www.givemeliberty.org> to learn more details.

• **Comment #40824 by Kellina on 12/05 at 6:36 am**

Ask Denis why he voted, all with 99 other Senators, for a HALF A TRILLION DOLLAR BUDGET for the defense department, shortly before the elections?

Do you really think it matters whether Dems or Repubs are in charge? Denis is obviously going to run for President. He knows that he can call for the end of the war, no one will heed him who has any power to stop the war, but he will get points from the public.

Fawning sycophant, Joshua, dig deeper.

• **Comment #40814 by Lula on 12/04 at 10:54 pm**

"Congress has to recognize that the American people took a stand in November. What could be more profound than changing the entire Congress, the House and the Senate, over the issue of the war?"

It seems that they are already planning on ignoring US, Harry Reid has already said he would not cut any funds. It is as if they do not care what the American people think. What are we supposed to do to make Congress listen to us? (and it cannot wait until the next election)

• **Comment #40787 by Quy Tran on 12/04 at 6:31 pm**

We absolutely cut this damn funds down to earth.

Homeless people, Katrina victims, natural disaster victims....need money to rebuild their lives. We no longer can afford wasting dollars to buy bloods.

• **Comment #40775 by Ken Larson on 12/04 at 5:39 pm**

There are good points in the article. I would like to supplement them with some information:

I am a 2 tour Vietnam Veteran who recently retired after 36 years of working in the Defense Industrial Complex on many of the weapons systems being used by our forces as we speak.

If you are interested in a view of the inside of the Pentagon procurement process from Vietnam to Iraq please check the posting at my blog entitled, "Odyssey of Armements"

<http://www.rosecoveredglasses.blogspot.com>

The Pentagon is a giant, incredibly complex establishment, budgeted in excess of \$500B per year. The Rumsfelds, the Administrations and the Congressmen come and go but the real machinery of policy and procurement keeps grinding away, presenting the politicos who arrive with detail and alternatives slanted to perpetuate itself.

How can any newcomer, be he a President, a Congressman or even the Sec. Def. to be - Mr. Gates- understand such complexity, particularly if heretofore he has not had the clearance to get the full details?

Answer- he can't. Therefore he accepts the alternatives provided by the career establishment that never goes away and he hopes he makes the right choices. Or he is influenced by a lobbyist or two representing companies in his district or special interest groups.

From a practical standpoint, policy and war decisions are made far below the levels of the talking heads who take the heat or the credit for the results.

This situation is unfortunate but it is absolute fact. Take it from one who has been to war and worked in the establishment.

This giant policy making and war machine will eventually come apart and have to be put back together to operate smaller, leaner and on less fuel. But that won't happen

until it hits a brick wall at high speed.

We will then have to run a Volkswagon instead of a Caddy and get along somehow. We better start practicing now and get off our high horse. Our golden aura in the world is beginning to dull from arrogance.

- **Comment #40768 by yours truly on 12/04 at 4:25 pm**

It's up to us to make sure that Congress cuts off all funding for the Iraq war, that there be no war no more, nowhere, never, not even one.

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