



## Triad of Congresswomen call for sensible budget priorities

:: David Goodner

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The military-industrial complex, war on terror, and occupation of Iraq are wasting the economic resources of the United States, but the people of Iowa have the power to change the country's direction, a "triad" of progressive Congresswomen from California said today in Waterloo.

Representatives Maxine Waters of South Central Los Angeles, Barbara Lee of Oakland/Berkeley, and Lynn Woolsey of San Francisco addressed an audience of 85 at the Faith Temple Church in Waterloo Saturday, during an event titled "Move Our Money: Making the Case for a Withdrawal from Iraq and New Budget Priorities".

"These women are rock stars," Representative Bruce Braley (D-IA) said at the event.

"They are the conscience of the Democratic Party."

Iowa House of Representative Deborah Berry said it was time for Iowans to "get off the sidelines" and come out against the "wasted resources and wasted lives" of American militarism.

"People sometimes don't understand that federal dollars effect the states as well."

"And we don't even want to bring race into this," Berry continued. "White America has a cold and Black America has pneumonia."

Representative Maxine Waters, the founder and chair of the Out of Iraq caucus, called the war in Iraq a waste and abuse of taxpayer dollars.

“It is sucking up our dollars and it is sucking up our resources.”

Waters called for a divestment from the Pentagon budget and a reinvestment in education, health care, housing, jobs, and job training.

“We need affordable homes and opportunities for American citizens.”

Waters challenged the Hawkeye state to pressure presidential politicians about why they oppose the war, how and when they are going to end it, and how they would re-allocate the saved resources.

“The eyes of the world are on you,” Waters said. She urged Iowans to go to the caucuses and “get in the game.”

“There comes a time in life when you have to rise to your feet and do the right thing, and the right thing to do is to end this war,” Waters said.

“Not another nickel. Not another dime. Not another soldier. Not this time.”

Representative Barbara Lee said the occupation of Iraq has already cost the country half a trillion dollars, and Waterloo’s share was \$67 million.

“That same amount of money could have paid for pre-school for 8,800 children, or hired 1,162 teachers, or insured over 40,000 children, or paid for 3,500 scholarships to the University of Iowa.”

Lee said there was no military solution for Iraq and argued for an immediate, fully-funded withdrawal, renewed diplomacy, and reparations. She also said fully-funded veterans care was an “entitlement.”

“The presence of American troops is fueling the insurgency,” Lee said. “We created the conditions that caused the civil war.”

“The South Korean model for Iraq would make us permanent occupiers,” she said. “This is not permissible.”

The triad of congresswomen also attacked unnecessary Pentagon spending, particularly obsolete Cold War-era weapons.

“It’s been fifteen years since the fall of the Soviet Union,” Lee said, “and I find it inexcusable that Congress continues to fund unnecessary weapons systems.”

“Domestic security is national security,” she continued, “and right now we spend \$60 billion a year on useless defense.”

Representative Lynn Woolsey, a former welfare mother, said that the triad co-sponsored the Common Sense Budget Act, a bill that would cut 15 percent of the Pentagon budget and reinvest it in necessary domestic spending and social services.

“The war in Iraq is costing America eleven million dollars an hour,” Woolsey said. “We are absolutely ignoring our priorities at home.”

“Ask the presidential candidates, which would you rather have?”

“A first rate school system?”

“Or an obsolete weapons system?”

The triad’s lectures in Des Moines and Waterloo Saturday were sponsored by Iowans for Sensible Priorities.

“Young Iowans have the most to lose in a federal budget that does not reflect sensible priorities,” said Chris Schwartz, 27, the Cedar Valley field organizer for Iowans for Sensible Priorities.

This unpaid blogger was the only press to show up at either of the triad’s lectures in Des Moines and Waterloo.

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