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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 16, 2005

Larson Statement on Pelosi Amendment Requiring "Strategy For Success" in Iraq

WASHINGTON, D.C. ♦ U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today issued the following statement regarding House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's amendment to Fiscal Year 2006 Defense Appropriations Bill (H.R. 2863) calling for President Bush to submit to Congress a detailed strategy for success in Iraq.

♦ This amendment isn't about setting a hard date for withdrawal, or leaving Iraq before we finish what we started. This amendment, rather, simply ensures that this Congress ♦ and the American people ♦ know what milestones and criteria by which our nation will judge success in Iraq. Without such a guide, we will continue to be left with an open-ended military commitment with no end in sight.

♦ Our men and women in uniform deserve nothing less than clear milestones that lead us to the day when we can bring them home. To get to that day, we need to know how we are going to assess the capabilities and readiness of Iraqi security forces and when we can expect them to take over vital security missions in their country. We need to know the number of U.S. and coalition advisors needed to support Iraqi security forces. And, finally, we need to know the benchmarks by which we will measure the political stability of Iraq.

♦ The fog of war is thick in Iraq, and this administration has only added to it by sticking to their vague notions of success and stability. But the President can cut through the fog by providing clear and demonstrable criteria by which we can judge our progress and, hopefully, success in Iraq.

♦ Since the start of this war, I and many of my colleagues have implored the President to level with the American people and our troops over the true cost and end strategy for the war. It is time for the administration and Congress to be honest with us about a path forward in Iraq - a path towards a success that brings our men and women home and restores our credibility at home and abroad. ♦

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