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LARSON STATEMENT ON HOUSE DEMOCRATIC FORUM ON IRAQ

WASHINGTON ♦ U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-1) today released the following statement on the House Democratic Forum on Iraq. The forum featured military and foreign affairs experts including House Armed Services Committee Ranking Member Ike Skelton (D-MO), House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Ranking Member John Murtha (D-PA), Dr. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Major General John Batiste.

Larson stated: ♦I would like to commend Speaker-designate Nancy Pelosi for gathering these experts to open up a dialogue on the War in Iraq. Congress has listened to nothing but the Administration♦s baseless reassurances and ♦stay the course♦ policy for too long. It is clear that as the American people discuss this issue amongst themselves from across the kitchen table, they want their leaders to engage in an open and honest debate in the halls of Congress. The experts that spoke before us today have offered a number of perspectives that will help us to hold the President accountable when we convene the 110th Congress.

♦The President has laid out a course that doesn♦t recognize the expertise of retired generals and diplomats, nor the work of the Iraq Study Group, nor the situation at hand in Iraq. My foremost concern is for the men and women in uniform, especially the members of the Reserve and Guard who have been deployed and redeployed multiple times. Our guiding principle should be whether we can look into the eyes of their parents and say that we are actively working to change the direction in Iraq and bring their sons and daughters home.♦

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Larson is Vice Chair of the House Democratic Caucus