

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS Before the U.S. House of Representatives January 18, 2007
Everybody Supports the Troops Mr. Speaker, I have never met anyone who did not support our troops. Sometimes, however, we hear accusations that someone or some group does not support the men and women serving in our armed forces. This is pure demagoguery, and it's intellectually dishonest. The accusers play on emotions to gain support for controversial policies, implying that those who disagree are unpatriotic. But keeping our troops out of harm's way, especially when war is unnecessary, is never unpatriotic. There's no better way to support the troops. Since we now know that Iraq had no weapons of mass destruction and was not threatening anyone, we must come to terms with 3,000 American deaths and 23,000 American casualties. It's disconcerting that those who never believed the justifications given for our invasion, and who now want the war ended, are still accused of not supporting the troops! This is strange indeed! Instead of questioning who has the best interests of our troops at heart, we should be debating which policy is best for our country. Defensive wars to preserve our liberties, fought only with proper congressional declarations, are legitimate. Casualties under such circumstances still are heartbreaking, but they are understandable. Casualties that occur in undeclared, unnecessary wars, however, are bewildering. Why must so many Americans be killed or hurt in Iraq when our security and our liberty were not threatened? Clichés about supporting the troops are designed to distract us from failed policies, policies promoted by powerful special interests that benefit from war. Anything to steer the discussion away from the real reasons the war in Iraq will not end anytime soon. Many now agree that we must change our policy and extricate ourselves from the mess in Iraq. They cite a mandate from the American people for a new direction. This opinion is now more popular, and thus now more widely held by politicians in Washington. But there's always a qualifier: We can't simply stop funding the war, because we must support the troops. I find this conclusion bizarre. It means one either believes the "support the troops" propaganda put out by the original promoters of the war, or that one actually is for the war after all, despite the public protestations. In reality, support for the status quo (and the president's troop surge) in Iraq means expanding the war to include Syria and Iran. The naval build up in the region, and the proxy war we just fought to take over Somalia, demonstrate the administration's intentions to escalate our current war into something larger. There's just no legitimacy to the argument that voting against funding the war somehow harms our troops. Perpetuating and escalating the war only serve those whose egos are attached to some claimed victory in Iraq, and those with a determination to engineer regime change in Iran. Don't believe for a minute that additional congressional funding is needed so our troops can defend themselves or extricate themselves from the war zone. That's nonsense. The DOD has hundreds of billions of dollars in the pipeline available to move troops anywhere on earth-- including home. We shouldn't forget that the administration took \$600 million from the war in Afghanistan and used it in Iraq, before any direct appropriations were made for the invasion of Iraq. Funds are always available to put our troops into harms way; they are always available for leaving a war zone. Those in Congress who claim they want the war ended, yet feel compelled to keep funding it, are badly misguided. They either are wrong in

their assessment that cutting funds would hurt the troops, or they need to be more honest about supporting a policy destined to dramatically increase the size and scope of this misadventure in the Middle East. Rest assured one can be patriotic and truly support the troops by denying funds to perpetuate and spread this ill-advised war. The sooner we come to this realization, the better it will be for all of us.