

Written by Alexandra Krasov
Tuesday, 31 May 2011 09:59

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Braley Calls for Immediate Withdrawal of U.S. Combat Troops from Afghanistan

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - Today, Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) released the following statement on U.S. involvement in Afghanistan:

“I believe the time has come for us to begin an immediate withdrawal of our combat troops from Afghanistan – with the goal of having them home by the end of 2011. This isn’t a decision I came to lightly, but one that I have struggled with for some time. Our justifications for going into Afghanistan are no longer valid, and meanwhile, the costs – both human and financial – of continuing this war are just too high.

“Earlier this year, I had a chance to travel to Afghanistan and meet with General David Petraeus and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry to discuss our progress there. I spoke with commanders on the ground and met with some of our 2,800 Iowa National Guard troops who are currently stationed in Afghanistan. I’ve met with too many families who’ve lost a loved one or seen them come home with missing limbs and other serious injuries. I believe it’s time to get as many of our brave men and women in uniform home as quickly as possible.”

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Braley Calls for Meeting with Army Sec. to Discuss Reports of Possible JMTC Closure at Rock Isl. Arsenal

Bipartisan Iowa, Illinois Delegation Seeks Answers

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - After learning that an internal task force at the Army Materiel Command (AMC) is considering relocating Rock Island Arsenal's Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC), Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) and a bipartisan group of lawmakers from Iowa and Illinois called for a meeting with the Secretary of the Army, John McHugh, as soon as possible to discuss their concerns about the cost associated with conducting such a move as well as the impact it would have on the Rock Island Arsenal.

"The Rock Island Arsenal and the JMTC are crucial to the Quad City economy," said Rep. Braley. "There are 1,700 jobs on the line if this facility is considered for closure. That outcome is unacceptable to me, and I intend to get answers on this as soon as possible."

Rep. Braley sent a letter to Sec. McHugh with U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (*D-IL*), Mark Kirk (*R-IL*), Chuck Grassley (*R-IA*) and Tom Harkin (*D-IA*) and Congressmen Bobby Schilling (*R-IL-17*) and Dave Loebsack (*D-IA-02*).

"It is our understanding that the Army Materiel Command (AMC) has formed an internal task force charged with cutting \$3 billion from the overall AMC budget. These recommendations are due in July as part of an Army-wide effort to find savings in a time of tight budgets. We understand that closing Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC) is a potential approach being considered by this task force," the Members wrote. "Given the urgency of this matter, we request a meeting with you as soon as possible to discuss these matters as they may impact Rock Island."

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A similar letter was sent to General Ann Dunwoody, the Commanding General of the Army Material Command which oversees the JMTC's operations and would have firsthand knowledge of the internal task force. Today's letters follow up on a previous request to meet with General Dunwoody who is not available to meet until July, the same month the task force will report its cost-cutting recommendations.

A copy of Rep. Braley's letter to Sec. McHugh is available here: <http://go.usa.gov/DY4>

A copy of Rep. Braley's letter to Gen. Dunwoody is available here: <http://go.usa.gov/DYY>

The Rock Island Arsenal Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC) is a one-of-a-kind U.S. Army facility, which manufactures critical equipment for our troops around the world. The more than 1,700 individuals employed at JMTC specialize in manufacturing artillery, armor, small arms, and mobile maintenance kits for use on the front lines. The JMTC, perhaps best known for howitzer production, operates the Army's only foundry and since 2003 has produced half of all armor for Army tactical wheeled vehicles. Veterans make up more than half of JMTC's highly skilled workforce.

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Populist Caucus Unveils "Gas Is Too Damn High" Plan to Lower Gas Prices

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - Today, the Congressional Populist Caucus unveiled its "Gas Is Too Damn High" plan to lower gas prices across America. Congressman Bruce Braley's (IA-01), Chair of the Populist Caucus, was joined by Vice Chairs Rosa DeLauro (CT-03), Peter DeFazio (OR-04), Donna Edwards (MD-04) and Caucus members Rep. Marcy Kaptur (

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OH-09

), Jackie Speier (

CA-12

), and Peter Welch (

VT-AT

) at a press conference this morning to announce the plan.

“If anyone in America is wondering whether gas is too damn high, I have an answer for you: hell yeah it is,” said Rep. Braley. “Millions of hardworking, middle class families are already struggling to make ends meet – gas prices shouldn’t be another burden for them to bear. Folks in my state drive long distances to get to work, sometimes over 100 miles, and they simply can’t afford gas at these prices. Congress and the President have to act now to ease the pain at the pump, and that’s exactly what our Populist Caucus plan will do.”

The plan would lower gas prices by going after speculators, ending tax breaks for big oil companies, and tapping the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. An outline of the “Gas Is Too Damn High” plan is available here: <http://go.usa.gov/DYT>

High-resolution photos from the press conference are available here: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/repbraley/>

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Braley Statement on the Arrest of Ratko Mladic

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - Today, Congressman Bruce Braley (IA-01) released the following statement on the arrest of Ratko Mladic, who was charged with genocide and other war crimes during the Bosnian war by the International Criminal Tribunal:

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“Ratko Mladic is responsible for heinous atrocities during the Bosnian war, including the genocide of thousands of civilians. His arrest is a victory for all of us who believe that justice must be served, and shows that crimes against humanity will not go unpunished. This news is one more step in helping the region heal and move on.

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MONDAY: Braley to Visit Iowa Veterans Home, Participate in Memorial Day Ceremony

On Monday, May 30th, Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) will visit the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown and participate in the Memorial Day ceremony there. This visit will be open to the press.

WHAT: Congressman Braley will visit the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown and participate in the Memorial Day Ceremony there.

WHEN: MONDAY, May 30, 9:00 – 10:30 AM CDT

WHERE: Dack Dining Room at the Iowa Veterans Home, 1301 Summit Street, Marshalltown, IA

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Braley Memorial Day Statement

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - Today, Congressman Bruce Braley (*IA-01*) released the following Memorial Day statement:

“This weekend, families all over the country will gather to honor the brave men and women who have fought for our country and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom.

On Memorial Day, I’m reminded of my father, who fought in the historic battle on Iwo Jima 65 years ago. He taught me to take pride in America’s values and fight for my beliefs. Most importantly, my father gave me a deeper understanding of the struggles and challenges facing members of the military and their families when they come home from war. While we have holidays to honor our fallen soldiers and our veterans throughout the year, we must also remember our military heroes and their families every day. And we must work every day to make sure they have the care and support they need when they’re on the battlefield, and when they come home.

This Memorial Day weekend, I keep all of our fallen heroes and their families in my thoughts. And I extend my deepest thanks to our veterans and their families. Thank you for your service, your sacrifice and your bravery.”

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Iowa and Illinois Delegations Seek Substantive Answers from Army on Arsenal

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Lawmakers Ask Army for Transparency, Accountability

Washington, DC – May 27, 2011 - Today, U.S. Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Mark Kirk (R-IL), and Chuck Grassley (R-IA), Congressmen Dave Loebsack (D-IA-02) and Congressman Bobby Schilling (R-IL-17) joined Congressman Bruce Braley (D-IA-01) in continuing to push for substantive answers to questions surrounding the future of the Rock Island Arsenal from General Ann Dunwoody, Commanding General of the Army Materiel Command (AMC).

Following the letter authored yesterday by Braley and supported by the entire Rock Island region's congressional delegation, the lawmakers today reiterated the need for substantive answers to questions they have raised surrounding the jobs and workload at Rock Island's Joint Manufacturing and Technology Center (JMTC); locating the Expeditionary Contracting Command (ECC) in Huntsville, Alabama away from the Army Sustainment Command (ASC); efforts to establish capabilities to perform work at Picatinny that has historically been done at Rock Island; and rumors of another round of base closures.

"We are deeply concerned that closing the JMTC is a potential approach being considered... (and) cannot understand how this is a course of action that will provide the needed cost savings. We do, however, understand how it would negatively impact our national security and we find that to be unacceptable," the group wrote to Secretary of the Army John McHugh and General Ann Dunwoody, the Commanding General of the Army Materiel Command that oversees the JMTC's operations.

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