

longer the target remains on their backs. Instead of doing something immediately to remove these targets from our troops, the President is expected to propose escalating the number of our troops in Iraq by 20,000.

Now, regardless of how you spin this, either as a surge or a bump, it amounts to an escalation of the war at precisely the time we should be seeking to bring the Iraq war to an end. It is like the man who finds himself in a hole and decides that the best way out is to keep digging.

An escalation in troops won't change a thing on the ground. Iraq is still in a civil war, and we are still occupiers.

As reported yesterday, nearly 23,000 Iraqis died in 2006. This is just in 1 year. And even worse, over 17,000 of these deaths came in the second half of the year.

In escalating the number of troops, the President fails to address exactly how U.S. troops will referee this civil war. Are we to pick sides and support ethnic cleansing of one group over another? Adding more U.S. troops to this mess will prove not only ineffective, it is just plain foolish.

But this tactic is nothing new. The President has added troops in the past. There have been escalations during the Iraqi elections in 2005 and 2006 to shore up Baghdad security. The violence may have quelled for a moment but only to return with a vengeance, as we have seen.

Finally, the President's plan is futile. Some of the President's own advisors and experts have questioned the utility of a troop escalation. Their reasons range from the Iraqi government's inability to capitalize on new troops to the sheer folly of adding more troops to an already incendiary situation.

No such luck. In fact, a senior military official was quoted last month as saying adding more troops would be like adding kerosene to a fire.

General Abizaid, the top military commander in Iraq, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in November 2006. He posed the question of his commanders and generals. He said, If we were to bring in more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq? General Abizaid reported that they all said no.

Mr. Speaker, the President's own press secretary, Tony Snow, said yesterday that the President still wants to hear what Members of Congress have to say. Well, I tell you, we have listened to the American people. Over 60 percent oppose the idea of increased troop levels. We have listened to the President's own commanders. Escalating the number of troops won't change the facts on the ground. I think it is time for the President to listen.

Mr. President, Mr. President, Mr. President, bring our troops home and make sure that we have no permanent military bases in Iraq.

□ 2015

END THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to give voice to tens of millions of Americans throughout our country who are looking for an end to the war in Iraq. I rise on behalf of our brave soldiers on our battlefield who have done everything our country has asked of them under terrible circumstances and who have made terrible sacrifices.

I rise on behalf of their families who have suffered great losses and who worry day and night for their safety and for the loved ones still in combat. I rise this evening to call on our President to give the Nation what it has deserved, a viable plan to safely bring this war to an end, to redeploy the American forces out of Iraq, and turn the future of Iraq over to the Iraqi people once and for all.

President Bush is soon expected to call for an escalation to the war in Iraq, seeking to deploy an additional 20,000 troops into combat. The President's plan would be just the latest in a series of flawed and tragic decisions that he has made regarding Iraq.

The President was advised at the outset of the war by one of his top generals to send a large American force in order to win. President Bush rejected that idea, and since then he has tried at different times a surge of American troops in an effort to win the war. Now, each time that effort has failed.

Now he appears ready to defy the odds and take great risks with the lives of others in order to try his plan one more time. The President has failed to make a compelling case for adding more troops into what is clearly the greatest American foreign policy disaster in half a century or even longer.

I applaud the efforts of House Speaker NANCY PELOSI and Senate Majority Leader HARRY REID, who have called for a new course in Iraq. On Friday they wrote: "Adding more combat troops will only endanger more Americans and stretch our military to the breaking point for no strategic gain. Rather than deploy additional forces to Iraq, we believe the way forward is to begin the phased redeployment of our forces in the next 4 to 6 months, while shifting the principal mission of our forces there from combat to training, logistics, force protection and counterterrorism."

I implore the President to seriously consider these views, and I implore him to also consider the views of the current and former military and political leaders of his own administration who have openly questioned sending additional troops to Iraq. For instance, on December 17 in 2006, former Secretary of State Colin Powell said, "I am not persuaded that another surge of troops into Baghdad for the purposes of sup-

pressing this communitarian violence, this civil war, will work."

On November 15 General Abizaid expressed, "I've met with every divisional commander. General Casey, the Corps commander, General Dempsey—we all talked together. And I said, 'In your professional opinion, if we were to bring more American troops now, does it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq?' And they all said no."

The war in Iraq is a mistake from the beginning, and I voted against authorizing this war. But regardless of one's position then, clearly there is no sound basis now for increasing America's military presence in Iraq. The war has claimed the lives of over 3,000 American soldiers and has wounded more than 20,000, and it has clearly become a civil war.

It is unconscionable to ask one more American soldier to fight and die in a civil war in Iraq. The President must engage key nations like Syria, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and others in an effort to create a political solution in Iraq. The Nation opposes the ongoing war in America. There is still time for the President to change course, to reconsider his call for 20,000 more troops in Iraq, and to begin the redeployment of our troops and our forces now.

I salute those who continue to serve in Iraq. I salute their families and pledge to them my unyielding support and respect as we try to safely bring the war to an end.

Mr. President, listen to the people of the Nation which you govern. They have spoken, and they have spoken overwhelmingly. They reject the prolonging of the war in Iraq. They want our soldiers redeployed and brought home safely, and they want it done now.

Please, Mr. President, listen to the people of this Nation.

STATEHOOD FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I come to the House to inform the House that I have today filed a bill to give full voting rights in this House to the people of the District of Columbia, who are second per capita in the Federal income tax they pay to support this government, this House and this Senate, and who have fought and died in every war since the creation of a Republic, including the outrageous war where we now serve.

I come in gratitude that the House is now governed by my own party, which for decades has supported not only what my bill today would afford, a vote in the House, but a vote in both Houses, and I come to thank my own caucus for that support. But I also come in some frustration and with