

(Mr. LANGEVIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. KIND addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Mrs. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. JONES of Ohio addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SOLIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. SOLIS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. Patrick Murphy) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PATRICK MURPHY of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. DAVIS of Illinois addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. ELLISON addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

(Mr. TAYLOR addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. HOLT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to myself as much time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I am here on the floor this evening along with some of my other colleagues who have been working for almost 4 years to bring to the attention of this House the mistakes, the errors, the misdirection of the President of the United States as relates to the war in Iraq. We have Members on this floor this evening, many of my colleagues, who have not only spoken time and time again about what is going on in Iraq, but they have spoken in their districts and around the country, helping people to understand that there are some of us here in the Congress of the United States who do not support this war.

We support our troops. They are there because they have been told by the President of the United States that they should volunteer to serve because our country was at risk. But we have been trying to help people to understand what is happening, what is not happening.

Last night the President addressed the Nation with a new plan that he called a "new way forward." Now, Mr. Speaker and Members, the President of the United States has come up with a lot of proposals since this debacle in Iraq. What he announced last night has been tried before, and he has failed at almost everything that he has attempted.

Now the President is talking about sending 21,000 troops to Iraq. Where are they going to come from? Whose family is going to have to make the sacrifice? Who are these young people who continue to volunteer and are told that they are going to be serving for a certain period of time only to be stopped from going home when they thought they would be going home? Under the President's plan, troops will have shorter amounts of time between deployments and longer deployments to Iraq. The length of Army deployments will be increased from 12 months to 15 months. Marine deployments will be increased to 12 months from 7 months. So where are these troops going to come from?

The President had announced that the Iraqi Government had committed

to a series of benchmarks, including another 8,000 Iraqi troops and policemen in Baghdad. So what if they have committed to a series of benchmarks? So what if they don't meet them? Then what? What do we do? The President did not say if they fail on the first benchmark that we are going to get out of there.

□ 1700

No. He just simply one more time said to the American people: Trust me. And I don't think that many of us are willing to continue to trust that the President of the United States has a vision for where he is going with all of this.

The President also said that they were going to force passage of long delayed legislation to share all revenues among Iraq's sects and ethnic groups. Now, we have heard this oil story before. If you can recall, when the President first went into Iraq, they said they were going to get the revenues from the oil; it would help pay for the cost of the war, and it would pay for the reconstruction of Iraq after we have torn it up. And then, of course, the President asked that the American people support him in getting \$10 billion for jobs and reconstruction in Iraq.

Well, now that the oil revenues are not forthcoming, this is a President who has spent, spent, spent, created a deficit. This is a President that refuses to support many of the domestic programs that many of us would like to see. We would like to see more affordable housing. We would like to see better schools. We would like to see comprehensive universal health care. But we cannot get the support of the President of the United States for these domestic needs. But he tells us, now that he has messed up, led us into war under false pretenses, that we are now to pay for it, and there is no oil revenue there to do it. Well, I think that my friends are going to join me in helping to unfold what has taken place.

At this time I would like to yield to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank and congratulate the gentlewoman from California, Ms. WATERS, and her partner from California for the great work that they have done here.

Ladies and gentlemen, I call your attention in this discussion tonight to what happened on Page 1 of the New York Times. And I read this to you for your consideration:

"Inviting a Battle on Capitol Hill. In making the effort to step up the American military presence in Iraq, President Bush invites an epic clash with the Democrats who run Capitol Hill, whose leader promised to force a vote on his plan. While Congress cannot force a change in the White House plan, Mr. Bush's initiative shows that he is ignoring the results of the November elections, rejecting the central thrust of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, and flouting some of the advice of his own generals.

“The move is in essence a calculated gamble that no matter how much hue and cry his new strategy may provoke, in the end the American people will give Mr. Bush more time to turn around the war in Iraq.”

Well, ladies and gentlemen, my suggestion is that, after last night’s performance, he is not going to be given more time by the American people and that, from a popularity rating at an all time low of 26, my prediction is that he will have fallen even lower as a result of last night’s performance.

So I think that this is quickly turning into the President’s war. There are those on all sides around him, including within the Republican Party, Members that will not go along any further. We have run out of steam. We have run out of illogic. We have looked through the exaggerations. So I conclude my remarks by just letting you hear about the editorial in the New York Times:

“We have argued that the United States has a moral obligation to stay in Iraq as long as there is a chance to mitigate the damage that a quick withdrawal might cause.” This is the editorial. “We have called for an effort to secure Baghdad, but as part of the sort of comprehensive political solution utterly lacking in Mr. Bush’s speech. This war has reached the point that merely prolonging it could make a bad ending even worse. Without a real plan to bring it to a close, there is no point in talking about jobs programs and military offenses. There is nothing ahead but even greater disaster in Iraq.” This is the media talking now.

It is time that the Executive branch recognize that the majority of the American people, most of the Congress, the media itself are all telling him that President Bush’s private war is not going to go anywhere, and to deliberately refuse to accept the decision and determination of the American people on November 7 means that he is now stepping beyond the democratic process.

Madam leader, Ms. WATERS, I thank you so much for yielding.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Ohio, Representative KUCINICH.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Congresswoman WATERS and all of the members of the Out of Iraq Caucus for keeping the awareness in this Congress on the need for America to take a new direction in the world because we are not just speaking about opposition to a war which should be opposed as illegal, but we are talking about the need for America to take a new role in the world, one where our country does not engage in preemption or unilateralism or first strike, one where America cooperates with the world community on matters of international security.

Remember, before 9/11, the felicity that America was held with in so many parts of the world. Remember, right after 9/11, how the world community opened its heart to the United States.

But over at the White House, just off the Oval Office, at a meeting of the National Security Council, Donald Rumsfeld and people in the administration were plotting the attack on Iraq the day after 9/11.

Yesterday the President mentioned 9/11 again. How many times does he have to mention 9/11 when he talks about Iraq? Why does he keep mentioning 9/11 when he talks about Iraq? Iraq had nothing to do with 9/11. This is the big lie. And it is this big lie that the whole policy is based on. The Bible says, that which is crooked cannot be made straight. That becomes prophecy when you are talking about Iraq because everything about what the President is doing in Iraq is crooked.

Let us look at his speech last night. Why did he spend so much time talking about Iran? Let us think about this. We know that in the last year, this administration has taken steps to try to move within the soft circumference of war against Iran. Our Air Force selecting bombing targets, moving in place 24 bunker busters with nuclear tips into the region. Last night talking about moving an aircraft carrier into the region, talking about Patriot missiles into the region, rattling sabers for war. He appears to be setting the stage for a wider war in the region. He has blamed Iran for attacks on America. He is saying that he is going to disrupt Iran. He is going to add this aircraft carrier. Isn’t one war enough for this President? Isn’t one misguided war enough for this President?

You know, it is time that the media and the Congress, as Mr. CONYERS pointed out, started to pay attention to what this President is saying and to what he does. It is imperative that Congress exercise its constitutional responsibility. And I think we are finally starting to see that. I think we are seeing people on both sides of the aisle realizing that there is a threat to our very democracy here; that our country is in peril by a Commander in Chief who has run amuck; who is without control; who stands by while Lebanon is basically annihilated south of the Litani River and actually, we found out later, was encouraging it; who is letting a civil war grow and fester in Iraq because he is going to send more troops and pour them into it. Or, Members of Congress, is the talk about a 21,000 troop increase in Iraq for the purposes of dealing with problems in Baghdad? Is that just a pretext? Since very few things are on the level with this administration, will some of those troops instead be sent to the border with Iran to provoke a conflict?

These are questions we have to be asking because nothing this administration has said has been the truth. They don’t have the capacity to tell a straight story to the American people, and they have spun the people of this country so much that people have become disoriented, but they are finally waking up, and they woke up in November. You want to talk about a

surge? There was a surge in November. There was a surge to the voting booth, and that surge accomplished a new Congress. And the issue was Iraq, and our leadership told us that before the election. Three issues, they said, will guide this election: Iraq, Iraq, Iraq. And so was created a new Congress. And so it is imperative that Congress step up to its obligation.

We have to say that we are not going to give this President any more money for the war, but we have to use the money that is in the pipeline right now to bring the troops home and, Mr. Speaker, to set in motion a process, because we understand; we don’t want to abandon the people of Iraq. But we know that the only way that we can get our troops out is to establish an international process, and we are not going to establish an international process until such time that we give up the occupation, that we remove our troops and close our bases because that is what is fueling the insurgency. So we can turn this around.

But this President and administration, which has such a talent for war, is determined to wreak chaos throughout the region. That is what they want. More chaos, more war, more control, as America moves towards fascism. Let’s call it what it is. We are losing our democracy here. What do we stand for? What are those troops out there for? They believe in this country. They love this country. And if we love this country and the troops, we have to bring them home. But, instead, we have got an administration that is prepared to do something else because, in Iraq, his new plan is a plan for more door-to-door fighting. It is a plan for more war, more civilian casualties, more troop deaths, more wasted money, more destabilization in the region and more separation from the world community. This President wants to send more troops to Baghdad in the middle of a civil war. This President wants to continue a war that everyone knows in Iraq the situation cannot be won militarily.

Does anyone in this administration have any sense at all? Does anyone in this administration have any heart, that we can send our troops into this miasma and cause not only their deaths but the deaths of innocent civilians when the President talks about taking the restrictions off our troops? What does that mean? Is that licensing wholesale slaughter of civilians and then a counter reaction which results in our troops getting slaughtered? This whole thing is wrong. This is not what America should be about. And everyone knows that.

And yet the President last night had the nerve to talk about the Iraqi oil again. He can never talk about Iraq without talking about oil. They want to privatize Iraq’s oil. Big surprise. Our troops were sent into Iraq. What was the first thing the administration had them do? Go to the oil ministry. They didn’t have them go to protect antiquity, protect children. No. Protect oil.

Do you know the Baker Report pointed out that 500,000 barrels of oil are being stolen every day? With 140,000 to 150,000 American troops there, how in the world can we have all that oil being stolen? How can that happen?

□ 1715

Do you know what the market value of that oil is? If you run the numbers, about \$62.25 a barrel. That is over \$11 billion worth of oil a year stolen. The patrimony of Iraq is just being stolen.

How are we going to have peace if the U.S. is sitting on top of oil, talking about privatizing the oil for the President and all of his buddies in the oil industry? We are going to have peace in that region? Those people are going to step back and let that happen? No way.

That is why we have to get out of Iraq, end the occupation, bring our troops home, close the bases and give the Iraqi people control of their oil once again and begin a process of reconciliation.

We need to create a new context where the international community helps us, because we are on our way out of there. The international community is not going to help the United States as long as we are occupiers.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this President wants to expand the war and the American people should be very concerned because it is not just the sons and daughters who are over there, but it is more who will be sent through an expansion of the war. It is the jeopardy of an escalation.

Have we not learned anything from the experience in Vietnam? Have we not learned that this march of folly we are on has been duplicated in the past? Have we not learned that the attempt to use raw military power is doomed to failure in a world that is interdependent and interconnected? Don't we know that we have a capacity to evolve? Isn't the American Revolution really a series of evolutions of our upward march into something better than we are? Aren't we prepared to take that? I think we are.

I think the American people know it is time for us to take this new direction, to reconnect and reunite with the world community. And we will begin that when this Congress takes a stand and says no more money for war; when this Congress takes a stand and says use the money that is there to bring the troops home; when this Congress takes a stand and says close those bases, don't privatize the oil. When we become actually a co-equal branch of government, which was the intention of our Founders in drawing up the Constitution and in ratifying the Constitution of the United States.

That is what America was always supposed to be about, not about an imperial Presidency. We rejected kings. We rejected autocracy when this country was founded. We didn't come through this long constitutional experience to the administration of George Bush just to turn our back on every-

thing America is about, turn our back on what our real purpose as a Nation is. It is about taking care of our people.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, reclaiming my time, I would like to thank the gentleman for all of the hours he has put into this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for yielding. I thank Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS from California for bringing us together here and for her great leadership in the Out of Iraq Caucus. And I also thank Congressman DENNIS KUCINICH of Ohio for his great intellect and great passion. It is a joy to serve with all of you.

I made more formal remarks earlier this evening on the subject of the President's proposal to escalate the number of troops in Iraq. But I wanted to spend a couple of minutes this evening reemphasizing the broader region and how U.S. policy is really impacting a growing anti-Americanism not just inside Iraq, but in many other countries, and how the United States is serving to create destabilization inside nations that is very, very dangerous for those countries, yet we play an immense role in that.

We see what has happened in Iraq. That is kind of the prism that we are looking through now, and we see the Sunni and Shia pitted against each other, and Christians fleeing across the border by the hundreds of thousands, thinking they have no more home inside Iraq. We have done a lot of damage in that country.

And then we look at what is happening inside nations like Bahrain. In recent parliamentary elections, we saw that almost a dozen, 20 parliamentarians were elected from very, very anti-American postures. And, of course, our Fifth Fleet is ported in Bahrain. Were it not ported there, I doubt that the Government of Bahrain would hold.

We look at what is happening in Pakistan and in the provinces of Pakistan. And in every single one of those provinces, the most anti-American candidates are being elected to and rising within the political structure of those countries.

We think about what just happened at the Horn of Africa, and we look at Ethiopia and the arms that the United States is providing and the soldiers that have entered into Somalia and our gunships shelling off of the coast into Somalia itself and the conflict that is brewing between Ethiopia and Somalia.

And you begin looking at what is happening in the general region. It isn't just Iraq. That is kind of a place where we need to keep our eye, but we need to open our eyes to what is happening across the region.

Inside of Lebanon, a country that I remain very close to because of the constituency that I represent, and the struggles we have had during our tenure here in the Congress to try to help Lebanon to be a leader in terms of signing the peace agreement with

Israel and remaining a major center for education, for trade, for business, for diplomacy in that part of the world, and the United States standing back and allowing Lebanon to be shelled around its entire perimeter, and a most unfortunate war between Lebanon and Israel, and we saw the Bush administration sit back.

And then we watch these demonstrations in the streets of Beirut. I mean, a million people from Hezbollah demonstrating against the United States. And then of course the Government of Lebanon, Prime Minister Siniora's government trying to hold on, trying to maintain a posture where all sects are able to participate.

But if you look at what is happening across the region in almost every single country, there is this destabilization.

In the Palestinian Authority where we thought during the Clinton administration we were making some progress, of course difficult, of course painstaking. Yet we see Hamas clashing in so many countries. What we have is destabilization rather than a movement toward reconciliation.

The policies of the Bush administration almost seem to result in destabilization in many, many countries in that region of the world.

In Afghanistan, we know that our work is cut out for us. Afghanistan in many ways is a capital without a country, and we are seeing the loss of more life from soldiers from the international community that are attempting to assist us to try to bring some functioning nation-state in place in Afghanistan.

I mention these issues because the President of the United States doesn't. He acts like they are not there. And the rising anti-Americanism that we see across the broader region is very, very dangerous. It is dangerous not perhaps so much for my generation, but for our children and grandchildren that will follow us. There are 1 billion people who subscribe to Islam in this world, and we have to not alienate every single one of them. We have to help them reconcile their internal differences, their tribal tendencies, their tendencies to talk across one another rather than with one another.

I would like to thank my colleague for allowing me a few minutes this evening. I could speak about the oil imperative and my deep, deep concerns about what is happening not just inside Iraq but with the powerful, powerful involvement of global oil companies in letting their power be felt in what happens in this capital and with the likely placements of pipelines across the regions that I am talking about and who are likely to be winners and losers in those efforts. There isn't time to do that tonight.

Without question, the United States, when people ask what can we do at home, what we should be doing here at home is becoming energy independent within a decade. No question. No

blinks, no hesitation, no doubts. Not by 2025, within one decade, because that would help free America from the bondage that we are held to from all of the dictatorships from whom we are importing oil. And those dictatorships are extremely important for the American to understand.

If you really look at where terrorism sprouts from, where did the majority of the 9/11 terrorists come from: Saudi Arabia. Why would they hit the United States? What might that have to do with? Where did they come from in Saudi Arabia, and what were they trying to do?

They were trying to get us out of Saudi Arabia. And you know what, they succeeded in doing that. We moved our forces out.

They are about the task of cleansing, in their view, their part of the world from those who control those important oil resources. The United States shouldn't be joined at the hip to oil dictatorships. The American people are beginning to understand who really controls rising oil and gasoline prices in this country, and the importance of us becoming energy independent here at home.

We need to focus the American people on what is happening across a broad region of the world that is extremely dangerous to us long term as the Bush policies are so narrowly focused and really counterproductive long term.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentlewoman for all of the good work she does.

I now yield to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN).

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Ms. WATERS for her leadership on the Out of Iraq Caucus and for her words here today. I want to thank all of my colleagues for participating in this Special Order this evening.

We are all here because we love this country, and we are all here because we are outraged by the Bush policy in Iraq. We believe our country is much better than what is on display in Iraq today. We want to change the policies of this country to make our country better, to make it reflect what this country really is all about, the finest and the best traditions of the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, on November 7, George Bush lost the election. The American people made it very clear that they wanted a change in direction in Iraq. That election was about Iraq, and the American people all across this country made it clear that they want a change in direction.

Last night the President of the United States gave a speech, and he made it clear that he doesn't care what the people of this country believe. He is ignoring the message and the statement of the mid-term elections.

You know, I had hoped, notwithstanding all of the media hype leading up to the President's speech last night, I was hoping maybe, just maybe he was going to do the right thing. That in-

stead of announcing tens of thousands of more American troops in Iraq, that he was going to announce that he was going to withdraw tens of thousands of American troops from Iraq and begin the U.S. withdrawal and begin the end of the U.S. occupation of Iraq. He did not do that.

So what do you do, Mr. Speaker? What do you do when you have a President of the United States who ignores the advice of his generals and military leaders who all told him that an escalation of U.S. forces was a bad idea? What do you do, Mr. Speaker, when you have a President of the United States who ignores the work of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group?

The group's report by all accounts says our policy in Iraq has been a failure, and it suggested that we find a way out. What do you do when you have a President of the United States who ignores that? What do you do when you have a President of the United States who ignores the will of the American people, who ignores the election last November 7? What do you, Mr. Speaker?

Well, all of us here have expressed our concern and our outrage over this policy, most of us since before the war again. But what do you do now? We can give more speeches, which we have been doing. We are sending more letters and issuing more press releases.

But, Mr. Speaker, when you have a President of the United States who is behaving as arrogantly as this President is with regard to this war, then Congress must take action. Congress must condition funding. Congress must withhold funding. Congress must cut funding if that is what it takes to end this war.

Now, there are those who say if you do that, you are going to shortchange our troops. I hear that from the Bush administration and from some colleagues here in this Congress. Let me tell you what shortchanges our troops is when we keep them in harm's way in a war that makes no sense, when we have them serve as referees in a civil war, when we put more and more of our troops, when we escalate our involvement in this war. That shortchanges our troops.

The fact of the matter is this administration has been shortchanging our troops for a long, long time, Mr. Speaker. When wounded veterans come back, when people come back from this war with post-traumatic stress syndrome and they can't get the care that they need, that shortchanges our troops.

I don't think it shortchanges our troops to reunite our soldiers with their families and their loved ones back in the safety of this country. That doesn't shortchange our troops. That actually is what our troops deserve.

I think we need to understand that all this rhetoric, the constant invocation of 9/11, the constant admonitions that somehow we are not being true to our troops if we talk about cutting aid,

withholding funds, stopping funding for this war because this President won't deal with us, we need to put that rhetoric aside.

□ 1730

This President will not listen to the American people. Put the rhetoric aside. We have to do what is right.

Let me tell you one final thing, Mr. Speaker. All of us who serve in this Congress do not have to wake up in harm's way. We are not on the front lines in Iraq. I would like to have an amendment introduced some day to a bill that says all these people who want to go to war all the time, they should be the ones who lead the charge. Let those who are up here constantly calling for "stay the course" and "let's continue the current policy," let them go and fight.

The time has come to end this war. That is what the American people want, and this Congress has the guts to do it. I thank the gentlewoman.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WELCH of Vermont). The Chair would remind Members that remarks in debate must avoid personalities toward the President.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, first let me thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. WATERS), for organizing this special order tonight, but also for her leadership in the Out of Iraq Caucus, which is growing each and every day.

I think most Members now, whether they supported or opposed the authorization to use force, understand now that we must get out of Iraq. So I want to thank Congresswoman WATERS and all of the members for continuing to beat the drum on behalf of the American people.

Last night, President Bush went on prime time television to present to the Nation the results really of what I call his "listening tour" on what to do about Iraq. Four years into this war, the President has suddenly taken an interest in listening, but he is certainly not hearing the American people.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted after the President made his case for escalation found that 61 percent of Americans oppose sending more than 20,000 additional troops to Iraq, with 52 percent saying that they strongly oppose the plan. Just 36 percent said that they backed the President's new proposal, and a majority of Americans said Bush's plan for our troops will make no difference whether the war can be won or lost.

The American people oppose this escalation. Members of Congress oppose this escalation. The President's own military advisers oppose this escalation. But in spite of this opposition, in spite of his claims to have been listening, the President went before the American people last night and basically just asked us to trust him, and

said, who cares about what the American people think or believe?

Well, I have a question for the President: Why, after the weapons of mass destruction that never existed; after the connections with al Qaeda that proved to be made up, with Iraq; after declaring "mission accomplished" and turning so many corners that made us, quite frankly, totally dizzy; why, given his track record, would we trust his judgment now?

Last night, the President said, "Where mistakes have been made, the responsibility lies with me." Let me tell you, twisting the intelligence to rush this Nation into an unnecessary war was a mistake whose cost we have not yet begun to measure, not only in terms of lives and treasure but also in terms of our Nation's security.

I agree with the President that the responsibility does indeed lie with him, so he needs to rectify this mistake and bring our troops home and bring them home now.

It is clear that the President, quite frankly, has lost touch with reality. Iraq has become the defining issue of his presidency, and he is more interested in trying to save what remains of this horrible legacy than he is in proposing anything that resembles a solution to the mess that his administration has made in Iraq.

The President has proposed an escalation of the war in Iraq at precisely the time, the exact time, when the American people are calling for us to bring this war to an end. He is like the man who finds himself stuck in a hole and decides the best way out is to keep digging.

The question the Congress and the American people must now ask is, how many people should die so that the President can avoid admitting he has staked his Presidency and legacy on an unnecessary war whose implementation his administration has really botched at every single turn? How many have to die so that the President can save face?

The President talked about increasing funds for job creation in Iraq, which would be a wonderful idea, quite frankly, since we bombed the heck out of that country. However, his administration has a miserable track record. Just look at it on reconstruction and the former Republican Congress's unwillingness to conduct oversight over the waste, fraud and abuse and war profiteering, \$10 billion-plus so far that is just being discussed, and we know it is more than \$10 billion that has been stolen in the name of rebuilding Iraq.

So without a fix to this broken system, the President's proposed reconstruction funds are really just throwing more good money after bad, and the taxpayers certainly don't deserve this. This is, quite frankly, a cynical idea, with his policies the way they are now.

The President says that pursuing his failed policies in Iraq is critical to fighting global terrorism. But let me

ask you, is spending \$2 billion a week to referee a civil war in Iraq the best way we can spend our money in fighting global terrorism? Let's not forget, the 9/11 Commission pointed out there was no connection, I mean no connection, between Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda prior to this war. Today, Iraq is a terrorist recruiting ground as a direct result, mind you, a direct result of this unnecessary war, and the longer we stay there, the worse it gets.

How much money should be spent propping up a failed policy in Iraq so that the President can kick the can and hand off responsibilities for his failed policy, quite frankly, this is what I think he is trying to do, to the next occupant of the Oval Office?

Finally, let me just say, in October, the President was asked if he would rule out military bases, permanent military bases, and his refusal to say yes, which he refused to say, really did fuel the mistrust of the Iraqi public and strengthen the insurgency.

So, Madam Chairman, I want to thank you again for your voice and for maintaining the 70-plus members of the Out of Iraq Caucus. This is a civil war. It is an occupation which should end, and the best way that we support our troops is to bring our troops home.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlelady for all of the hard work she does on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady from California for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, before we can even consider sending more of our young men and women into harm's way, we must first determine what our mission is in Iraq. Only then will it be possible to intelligently discuss the number of troops necessary to meet that mission. But 4 years after going to war in Iraq, the administration has yet to clearly articulate a mission. Without a mission and a strategy with a credible chance of success, we should not even be discussing an increase in troop levels.

Mr. Speaker, before we respond to the President's call for an escalation of the war in Iraq, we must first put his speech in the context of the history of the war in Iraq. We need to begin with a discussion of what the current 130,000 troops are doing in Iraq now before we can discuss what 20,000 additional troops might do.

The original reasons which were provided as the rationale for going to war, Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, Iraqi leaders were connected with the 9/11 attacks, and that Iraq posed an imminent threat to the United States, all turned out not to be true.

We have found no weapons of mass destruction, and we know that Iraqi leaders were not connected with the 9/11 attacks. And we were told before the invasion into Iraq that, in the opinion of the CIA, Iraq posed no imminent terrorist threat to the United States. In

fact, a letter from the Director of the CIA to the Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, dated October 7, 2002, specifically stated that the CIA believed that Iraq and Saddam Hussein did not pose a terrorist threat to the United States and would not be expected to pose such a threat unless we attacked Iraq.

Last night, the President once again attempted to associate our presence in Iraq with the so-called war on terrorism. The truth is that our presence in Iraq has actually increased our risk to terrorism. Furthermore, the term "war on terrorism" is a rhetorical term without any relationship to reality. "Terrorism" is not an enemy; it is a tactic. The enemy is al Qaeda. We attacked Afghanistan because al Qaeda was there.

But after the initial reasons turned out to be false, we have been subjected to a series of excuses for being in Iraq, such as the need to capture Saddam Hussein, the need to capture al-Zarqawi and the need to establish a democracy.

Well, Saddam Hussein was in jail for almost 2 years before he was recently hanged. Al-Zarqawi was killed over 6 months ago, and Iraq held Democratic elections over a year ago. Yet we remain in Iraq, with no apparent end in sight. And here we are talking about increasing, not decreasing, troop levels.

So what are we doing in Iraq? Why did we go in? What do we expect to accomplish? And what will our strategy be for getting out? After we receive truthful answers to these questions, we can intelligently discuss appropriate troop levels.

Last night, the President said he was laying out a new mission for Iraq, thereby clearly acknowledging that whatever the old mission was, it wasn't working. But there is still no clearly defined end goal and clearly defined explanation of how failure or success can be measured. So we remain where we were before the speech, which is on an unclear, undefined path, while continuing to put more troops in harm's way.

If our mission is to stabilize Baghdad, military experts have already said that an additional 20,000 troops is woefully insufficient, so sending these troops will not accomplish that goal. And what happens if Iraq fails to meet its responsibilities, or Baghdad remains unstable and the price is more American deaths? Will we send even more troops? Or will we just cut and run?

And how will we know the new initiative will work? Before our invasion into Iraq, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld predicted that the war would last, and I quote, "six days, six weeks. I doubt 6 months." It has been almost 4 years, and we are still in Iraq with no end in sight.

At the outset of the war, the administration advised the House Budget Committee that it expected the cost of

the war to be so minuscule that it advised the committee not to include the cost of the war in the Federal budget, and the administration official who suggested that the cost of the war might exceed \$100 billion was fired.

To date, the cost of the war to the United States is over \$375 billion, with no end in sight. Over 3,000 courageous Americans have already lost their lives. How many more will die if this new strategy falls as far from the predicted result as the original time and cost estimates? We need to be honest in clearly stating the likelihood that this initiative might fail.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, as far as developing a new mission and strategy, it is imperative that we ask where these additional troops will come from. Many will have to come from the National Guard and Reserve, and the escalation will mean longer and multiple deployments. But our troops already in Iraq have served for above-average deployments, and many have already completed multiple tours. Other troops may be redeployed from other assignments. So we must ask what moving these troops will mean to our global national security. We cannot assess the wisdom of an escalation without first answering these critical questions.

We need to develop a coherent plan for Iraq, and that can only begin with truthfully acknowledging our situation there. Unfortunately, all we have gotten from this administration is essentially "Don't worry, be happy. Success is around the corner. And if you don't believe that, then you are not patriotic."

Last November, the American people sent a powerful message that they wanted a real change in Iraq, not more of the same. This Congress needs to hold substantive hearings on why we entered Iraq in the first place, what the present situation is, what we can now expect to accomplish and what the strategy is to accomplish it, and only then can we intelligently discuss the troop levels necessary to accomplish that goal.

It is absurd to discuss troop levels first before we have answers to these critical questions. The American people and our courageous men and women on the front lines deserve a clear, articulated and sensible approach to ending the war in Iraq. Starting with an escalation of military forces is a step in the wrong direction.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON).

□ 1745

Ms. WATSON. Thank you so much, Representative WATERS, for allowing us this opportunity to express our feelings towards the escalation of the war, the war of choice, in Iraq.

I am adamantly against this expansion. I see it as another provocation. I see Iraq now being the spawning ground that attracts all those who hate America to come and kill Americans.

The President is asking for 21,500 more troops to go on the killing fields. We don't even know who the enemy is. We use the name insurgents. We don't even know the President's definition for victory. How do you measure victory?

I remember the day that a great many Members stood up saluting the fact that Iraq had a democratic election. Apparently, there is no faith in those that were elected to administer the country of Iraq because they are talking about America losing the war.

We were told by Rumsfeld that 368,000 Iraqis had been trained. Where are they? Do they run away in the heat of battle? There is a lot of mystery surrounding this whole debacle called the "war against terrorism" in Iraq.

I thought we were looking for Osama bin Laden. All of a sudden we switched over to a nation of 28 million people, to Saddam Hussein, who didn't like Osama bin Laden.

I really feel that we were misdirected, misguided and, really, bottom line, lied to. And I don't know if you knew this, but while the President was making his presentation last night on a new direction forward, U.S. forces entered the Iranian consulate in Iraq's Kurdish-dominated north and seized computers, documents, and other items. It was also reported that five staff members were taken into custody. This is during the time that the President was making his speech.

Now, what I fear is that when the President said the axis of evil, Iran and North Korea, one down, the second one to come, and the third one very soon.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to end with giving you this piece of information. What does that state? I understand right now that the United States has worked with the Iraqi Government to have a law where they will contract out their oil for the next 30 years and 75 percent of the proceeds will go to the contractors. Seventy-five percent. It is the major rip-off of all time.

Was that the real reason why we invaded without provocation into Iraq?

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentlewoman from California, and I now yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio, Representative STEPHANIE TUBBS JONES.

Mrs. JONES of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the gentlewoman from California for her leadership in overseeing this Out of Iraq task force. Clearly, the work that this task force has done had an impact on the elections of 2006 and continues to have an impact as we go down the line.

I want to be very brief. Last night, I went home and I turned on the President's speech; and as a good American, I wanted him to convince me that there was reason to send 21,000 young men and women back into Iraq. See, as a young Congresswoman, this is my 8th year, I have attended five funerals: a young man 19, another young man 28, another young man 28, another one 40-something, and another one in his 30s.

And I sat there and I looked into the faces of those mothers, fathers, sisters,

brothers, aunts, uncles, spouses and children; and it was hard for me to come up with words to explain to them why their family members had died.

We can talk about how they paid the ultimate price; but I wanted to say to them, ladies and gentlemen, I am not going to let their deaths be just another number in this 2,000, 3,000 young men and women we have lost. So I waited last night for President Bush to tell me something, give me an indication, say, STEPHANIE, this is why we need to send 21,000 more people; and I never got it. I never, ever got it. So it is hard for me to explain to my constituency that we ought to send 21,000 more people.

So I come to the floor once again this evening to say to Ms. WATERS and all the rest of my colleagues in the Out of Iraq conference, it is the same old song with a different meaning. Same beat, same old song over and over again. It is time to come out of Iraq.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you very, very much.

I now yield to one of our new Members of Congress, a gentleman who comes with a great background and who has hit the floor running, Representative KEITH ELLISON from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentlewoman from California for allowing me to participate in the Out of Iraq Caucus. I do formally request membership in such caucus at this moment and anxiously await being a full-fledged member of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise today really in the mindset of this coming weekend, which is Martin Luther King's birthday celebration. Martin Luther King, we all know, was a valiant defender of civil and human rights, also stood up strongly for the poor, but in this day and time must be recognized as one of the clearest voices for peace that this country has ever known.

As I stand before you asking this country to join this Out of Iraq Caucus of the Congress, the whole United States should rise up, one and all, and join the caucus. And I just want to mention that it is important now to remember that those voices of peace, of which Martin Luther King was a key voice, need to be listened to, need our attention.

Today, it is important to point out, as we walk toward the Martin Luther King holiday, that it was he who spoke up for peace, and he didn't do it in a way that was easy. Martin Luther King was arrested over 30 times as he was talking about peace. In 1967, and it is important to remember this, in 1967 he gave a speech in which he said that silence could continue no more. And then on April 4 of 1967, 1 year before his death, he said that we have got to get out of Vietnam.

And he didn't just say that Vietnam was the issue. He said Vietnam was critical, and Vietnam was what he was talking about at that time, but he actually projected a greater vision than

just Vietnam. He talked about a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation. In fact, what he talked about was a generosity of spirit, a politics of spirit in which we all could live in peace with each other.

We need to say, no escalation, get out of Iraq now, but America needs to adopt as its guiding principle, America needs to say the thing that guides us the most is peace. It is not living in superiority to the nations of the world, but living in brotherhood and sisterhood with the nations of the world. We need to talk about a peace of generosity, a peace of inclusion, and a peace that will allow us to look our constituents in the face and say we will not send your brothers, your sisters, your children, your parents into a war zone to be one of 20,000 more targets.

We are going to stand up with courage, just like Martin Luther King did. We will withstand the criticism of those detractors who just don't get it. We will stand with the people who need peace, which is our constituents, and with the soldiers. Today, my colleagues, we are actually protecting our soldiers, as they protect us, by calling for no escalation. Withdraw from Iraq. Peace now.

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank you very much. I know this is a Special Order that has drawn the interest of Members from vast regions around America.

The important thing is we are Americans, that we want what is best for America, and that is why the Congress created the Baker Commission, not for it to be partisan but for it to be bipartisan, for it to have experts from around the Nation. To my great disappointment, the President stood up, ignored the Congress, the people, the experts, the military experts, and the wisdom that would indicate that it is time now to redeploy our troops.

This is a Martin Luther King moment. His birthday will be celebrated this coming Monday. Martin Luther King was courageous enough, as my colleague from Minnesota just said, to have the courage to go against the Vietnam War, realizing it was better to have peace over war and life over death.

The President laid out last night an Iraqi-dependent policy for America. They have, in essence, called upon the American people to depend upon this failed government to be the source of our strategy in Baghdad. We now will send some 20,000-plus troops to engage in a nine-district process of dragging people out of their homes on the premise of utilizing Iraqi soldiers and security forces. My question to the President is: Why did we not do this before?

Let me say in closing that I want a peaceful solution. I did not vote for the war, but I believe in our military. I believe in America and democracy. Bring

the allies to the table in the region, have a political diplomacy, and have our troops backup the Iraqis. We cannot have a foreign policy dependent upon Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor today to speak on the most critical issue facing our country, the war in Iraq. This misguided, mismanaged, and costly debacle was preemptively launched by President Bush in March 2003 despite the opposition of me and 125 other members of the House. To date, the war in Iraq has lasted longer than America's involvement in World War II, the greatest conflict in all of human history.

The Second World War ended in complete and total victory for the United States and its allies. But then again, in that conflict America was led by a great Commander-in-Chief who had a plan to win the war and secure the peace, listened to his generals, and sent troops in sufficient numbers and sufficiently trained and equipped to do the job.

Mr. Speaker, I say with sadness that we have not that same quality of leadership throughout the conduct of the Iraq War. The results, not surprisingly, have been disastrous. To date, the war in Iraq has claimed the lives of 3,015 brave servicemen and women (115 in December and 13 in the first 9 days of this month). More than 22,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries. American taxpayers have paid nearly \$400 billion to sustain this misadventure.

Based on media reports, tonight President Bush will not be offering any new strategy for success in Iraq, just an increase in force levels of 20,000 American troops. This reported plan will not provide lasting security for Iraqis. It is not what the American people have asked for, nor what the American military needs. It will impose excessive and unwarranted burdens on military personnel and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the architects of the fiasco in Iraq would have us believe that "surging" at least 20,000 more soldiers into Baghdad and nearby Anbar province is a change in military strategy that America must embrace or face future terrorist attacks on American soil. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we learned last year when the "surge" idea first surfaced among neoconservatives.

Mr. Speaker, the troop surge the President will announce tonight is not new and, judging from history, will not work. It will only succeed in putting more American troops in harm's way for no good reason and without any strategic advantage. The armed forces of the United States are not to be used to respond to 911 calls from governments like Iraq's that have done all they can to take responsibility for the security of their country and safety of their own people. The United States cannot do for Iraq what Iraqis are not willing to do for themselves.

Troop surges have been tried several times in the past. The success of these surges has, to put it charitably, been underwhelming. Let's briefly review the record:

1. OPERATION TOGETHER FORWARD, (JUNE–OCTOBER 2006):

In June the Bush administration announced a new plan for securing Baghdad by increasing the presence of Iraqi Security Forces. That plan failed, so in July the White House announced that additional American troops would be sent into Baghdad. By October, a

U.S. military spokesman, Gen. William Caldwell, acknowledged that the operation and troop increase was a failure and had "not met our overall expectations of sustaining a reduction in the levels of violence." [CNN, 12/19/06. Washington Post, 7/26/06. Brookings Institution, 12/21/06.]

2. ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM (SEPTEMBER–DECEMBER 2005):

In the fall of 2005 the Bush administration increased troop levels by 22,000, making a total of 160,000 American troops in Iraq around the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections. While the elections went off without major violence these escalations had little long-term impact on quelling sectarian violence or attacks on American troops. [Brookings Institution, 12/21/06. www.icasualties.org]

3. CONSTITUTIONAL ELECTIONS AND FALLUJAH (NOVEMBER 2004–MARCH 2005):

As part of an effort to improve counterinsurgency operations after the Fallujah offensive in November 2004 and to increase security before the January 2005 constitutional elections U.S. forces were increased by 12,000 to 150,000. Again there was no long-term security impact. [Brookings Institution, 12/21/06. New York Times, 12/2/04.]

4. MASSIVE TROOP ROTATIONS (DECEMBER 2003–APRIL 2004):

As part of a massive rotation of 250,000 troops in the winter and spring of 2004, troop levels in Iraq were raised from 122,000 to 137,000.

Yet, the increase did nothing to prevent Muqtada al-Sadr's Najaf uprising and April of 2004 was the second deadliest month for American forces. [Brookings Institution, 12/21/06. www.icasualties.org. USA Today, 3/4/04]

Mr. Speaker, stemming the chaos in Iraq, however, requires more than opposition to military escalation. It requires us to make hard choices. Our domestic national security, in fact, rests on redeploying our military forces from Iraq in order to build a more secure Middle East and continue to fight against global terrorist networks elsewhere in the world. Strategic redeployment of our armed forces in order to rebuild our nation's fighting capabilities and renew our critical fight in Afghanistan against the Taliban and al-Qaeda is not just an alternative strategy. It's a strategic imperative.

Mr. Speaker, it is past time for a new direction that can lead to success in Iraq. We cannot wait any longer. Too many Americans and Iraqis are dying who could otherwise be saved.

I believe the time has come to debate, adopt, and implement the Murtha Plan for strategic redeployment. I am not talking about "immediate withdrawal," "cutting and running," or surrendering to terrorists, as the architects of the failed Administration Iraq policy like to claim. And I certainly am not talking about staying in Iraq forever or the foreseeable future.

I am talking about a strategic redeployment of troops that: Reduces U.S. troops in Iraq to 60,000 within six months, and to zero by the end of 2007, while redeploying troops to Afghanistan, Kuwait, and the Persian Gulf. Engages in diplomacy to resolve the conflict within Iraq by convening a Geneva Peace Conference modeled on the Dayton Accords. Establishes a Gulf Security initiative to deal with

the aftermath of U.S. redeployment from Iraq and the growing nuclear capabilities of Iran. Puts Iraq's reconstruction back on track with targeted international funds. Counters extremist Islamic ideology around the globe through long-term efforts to support the creation of democratic institutions and press freedoms.

As the Center for American Progress documents in its last quarterly report (October 24, 2006), the benefits of strategic redeployment are significant: Restore the strength of U.S. ground troops. Exercise a strategic shift to meet global threats from Islamic extremists. Prevent U.S. troops from being caught in the middle of a civil war in Iraq. Avert mass sectarian and ethnic cleansing in Iraq. Provide time for Iraq's elected leaders to strike a power-sharing agreement. Empower Iraq's security forces to take control. Get Iraqis fighting to end the occupation to lay down their arms. Motivate the U.N., global, and regional powers to become more involved in Iraq. Give the U.S. the moral, political, and military power to deal with Iran's attempt to develop nuclear weapons. Prevent an outbreak of isolationism in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, rather than surging militarily for the third time in a year, the president should surge diplomatically. A further military escalation would simply mean repeating a failed strategy. A diplomatic surge would involve appointing an individual with the stature of a former secretary of state, such as Colin Powell or Madeleine Albright, as a special envoy. This person would be charged with getting all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—involved more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

While their interests and ours are not identical, none of these countries wants to live with an Iraq that, after our redeployment, becomes a failed state or a humanitarian catastrophe that could become a haven for terrorists or a hemorrhage of millions more refugees streaming into their countries.

The high-profile envoy would also address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the role of Hezbollah and Syria in Lebanon, and Iran's rising influence in the region. The aim would not be necessarily to solve these problems, but to prevent them from getting worse and to show the Arab and Muslim world that we share their concerns about the problems in this region.

Mr. Speaker, the President's plan has not worked. Doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result is, as we all know, a definition of insanity. It is time to try something new. It is time for change. It is time for a new direction.

OUT OF IRAQ

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

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is good to see you in the Chair, and I thank the gentleman for allowing me to do this.

I am a proud member of the Out of Iraq Caucus, and my office has been flooded with letters and calls from constituents who want the President to

start bringing the troops home from Iraq. According to all the polls, an overwhelming number of Americans are opposed to any escalation.

Instead of a plan to begin redeployment, Americans heard a giant sucking sound from President Bush last night, pulling our troops further into the civil war that has already taken the lives of so many of our brave sons and daughters.

The President is dealing with an Iraq that exists only in his imagination. I challenge the President to answer the questions: Who are our allies? Who are our enemies? What does winning mean? How long will American troops be there? How many lives are you willing to sacrifice?

Escalation presumes a military solution is still possible. The catastrophe facing Iraq is political, and yet there is no evidence of a political process that has any hope of achieving any kind of reconciliation or success.

The President has virtually fired General John Abizaid, our top commander for Iraq in the region, who consulted with all of the divisional commanders and asked them in their professional opinion, if we were to bring in more troops would it add considerably to our ability to achieve success in Iraq. They all said no, but the President has not listened.

The British have announced that rather than escalating their participation in this war, they are going to bring 3,000 troops out of Iraq in May.

□ 1800

We are not receiving support from any allies. So it seems to me, as now a sponsor of the Markey-Kennedy bill, H.R. 353, that Congress has to step in, has to state its belief that this escalation is misguided. And according to the Markey-Kennedy bill, it would prevent the President from spending another taxpayer dollar to increase troop levels in Iraq without the consent of Congress. And after 4 years, it is time for President Bush to wake up and realize that his policy in Iraq has failed. Most of the country has already come to that conclusion.

Now, we must renew our military, work to restore our diplomatic credibility and, above all, begin redeploying our troops out of Iraq.

And I would like to yield the remaining time to my colleague from California, LYNN WOOLSEY.

Ms. WOOLSEY. First, I would like to thank the Congresswoman from California for her leadership tonight with this special order and also her leadership of the Out of Iraq Caucus.

I will echo, to save time, every single word that has come out of the mouths of my colleagues this evening. But there is one thing we have not talked about that, every single time I am interviewed, somebody says: But Congresswoman, what will happen to the Iraqi people if the United States leaves?

My answer is asking them a question right back: Have you not paid atten-

tion to what is happening to the Iraqi people right now with our very presence?

It is my opinion, and my belief, and I know that I am right, when the United States Army military leaves Iraq, the insurgency will calm down. The United States then is responsible to work internationally to help Iraq rebuild its country, invest in its infrastructure, invest in its economy, invest in its education and help their people with getting their feet back on the ground.

And I will end by just saying this. The United States is not going to determine the fate of Iraq. Only the Iraqis will determine their fate.

MEDICARE PART D PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PERLMUTTER). The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, this opportunity for the minority party during this hour is dedicated to the subject of what we are going to be dealing with tomorrow, H.R. 5, and that regards the Medicare Part D prescription drug, allowing or, in fact, requiring the Secretary to negotiate prices. And this is a hugely important issue.

But I want to take just a minute to respond to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle that just spent their hour with the Out of Iraq Caucus. In fact, they asked me for permission for an additional 5 minutes because they had some very passionate Members that had not had an opportunity to speak.

I gladly granted them that opportunity. That is what makes this Congress great. That is what makes this country great, the willingness to listen to diverse opinions.

But I want to say, and I want to take just a few minutes before we get into the discussion of Medicare Part D, how diametrically opposed I am to what the Out of Iraq group just had to say during this last hour, and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, hour and 5 minutes.

I don't object to their right to have that opinion. I do certainly take exception, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues, when folks stand up here, and I am not talking about new Members of this body. In fact, there was one new Member from Illinois, the gentleman from Illinois, who is going to be part of the Out of Iraq Caucus. I am talking about very senior, thoughtful Members. To stand up and suggest that the President lied to the American people, I think, is really not, in fact, even close to being the truth.

The President, I think, is an honest man. And last night, Mr. Speaker, in his presentation to the American people, I thought he did an excellent job of explaining why it is so important for us to try to apply, if not a knock out blow to the insurgency and the terrorism, the sectarian violence that is