

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