

Senator George McGovern and Dr. William Polk on one such plan. This is a unique opportunity for Members to discuss available options. I encourage my colleagues to join us at this forum on Friday, day after tomorrow, at 9:30 in the Cannon caucus room.

We know there is no quick solution to put Iraq and the region back together again. But until we start to seriously consider the plans out there, we are stuck with President Bush's escalation and status quo. And you know what? Because I respect the troops and I respect their families so very much, I refuse to "stay the course."

So I tell the President: No, no to escalation. I tell the President: No, no to the status quo. And I say: Yes, yes to strengthening our Nation by protecting those who have already given so very much and bringing them home to their families.

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

THE IRISH PEACE PROCESS

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

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, first let me say how happy I am to see our Speaker, the gentleman from New Jersey, who I would mention to my colleagues was the Speaker of the General Assembly in the State of New Jersey, so he certainly knows what to do in the Speaker's chair. Great to see you up there this evening.

I come to the floor this evening to once again call on Dr. Ian Paisley and the Democratic Unionist Party to support peace and justice in Northern Ireland and not get in the way of creating a truly devolved government. I call on my colleagues to support the "New Beginning" policy envisioned in the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent Patten Report, even as Northern Ireland tackles the controversial issue of setting up a fair and effective criminal justice system.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair has called Sinn Fein's leadership under President Gerry Adams "remarkable," and I certainly agree. Despite a long history of unfair treatment and attacks by unionist paramilitaries and others, Sinn Fein is moving down the path to devolution by supporting the Police Service of Northern Ireland and working with the criminal justice system.

In order for the citizens of Northern Ireland to have a police force they can respect and cooperate with, they need to be assured that power sharing will be restored and officials will ensure

sufficient accountability to prevent the types of abuses that have plagued the Catholic community in the north for so long.

Mr. Speaker, the community of Northern Ireland and all of the political parties must be involved in the process to create a New Beginning to Policing. Since the Patten Commission Report in September 1999, much progress has been made in terms of increased recruiting of Catholic officers, establishment of district policing boards, and increased oversight and accountability of the police service. The St. Andrews Agreement, issued this past year, showed that the path to restoring critical political institutions should include support for and devolution of policing.

Sinn Fein has taken the bold step of moving forward to support the policing institutions, and now Dr. Paisley seems to want to stay in the past instead of recognizing that it is time to move forward with a police service and a government that respects and represents all the people of Northern Ireland.

Mr. Speaker, I again commend Gerry Adams, the leadership of Sinn Fein, Prime Minister Blair, and the Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, for all their hard work and courage in moving the peace process forward. It will not be easy to overcome the troubling history of discrimination and distrust between communities in Northern Ireland. I hope, however, that Dr. Paisley and the membership of the Democratic Unionist Party will put aside the politics of the past and become a partner in moving towards a just and lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

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

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

THE WAR IN IRAQ, LATINOS AND TROOP ESCALATION PLAN

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, good evening to you and to those families that are listening to us tonight.

I believe our Nation needs a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq, one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with neighboring countries and the region to create a stable and peaceful Nation in Iraq.

Unfortunately, President Bush missed the opportunity to set the United States on a new course in Iraq. Without a plan to secure the peace and stabilize Iraq, President Bush's plan will do nothing but unnecessarily risk the lives of more U.S. servicemen.

I have here displayed 13 of those service members who represent my district,

most of whom, if you can look through each, are under the age of 30 and who left families, parents and children. They went to serve our country with honor, no doubt, but many of them enlisted in the Reserve and the Guard hoping that they would come back to get a college education, to have a better life, to be able to get housing and to get health care for their families. Unfortunately, that dream is not true for many of them.

There are approximately, at this time, 132,000 U.S. troops serving in Iraq. This war, as you know, is having a significant impact on our families and our communities. Last December was the deadliest month of the war in over 2 years. U.S. casualties have exceeded well over 3,000 lives, and more than 22,700 servicemen and women have been permanently injured or disabled. Nearly half of those will not be able to lead a normal life.

While Latinos make up just about 12 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 17 percent of the service men and women in combat in Iraq, and about 11 percent of those have already been killed.

In the District that I represent in California, we have lost these young men. Sadly, Latinos, both citizens and noncitizens, and I mean those that carry green cards, are proudly there to serve our country, but we need to do more for them.

In 2001 to 2005 alone, the number of Latinos in the Army who enlisted rose by 26 percent. There are currently 35,136 green card soldiers proudly serving our country today. An additional 28,000 have become U.S. citizens since 9/11, and 73 have been granted citizenship after death.

This includes one of my very own, who was a fallen soldier early in the war, a young man, Lance Corporal Francisco Martinez, in the Marines, representing the City of Duarte in the San Gabriel Valley. His service to this Nation is countless. He was not even a U.S. citizen. He gave his life and was granted posthumous citizenship. But we need to do more for our soldiers than that.

The plan the President is going to speak to us of tonight ignores the real needs of our troops and the reality of the situation. Three times in the past 2 years President Bush has increased the number of troops in Iraq. Three times the approach has failed. From November 2004 to March 2005, the level of U.S. troops increased from 12,000 to 150,000. The increase did nothing to improve long-term security.

During the constitutional referendum in the fall of 2005, troop levels increased by 22,000 soldiers, for a total of more than a 160,000 American service men and women in Iraq. Again, this increase, while limiting major violence during the referendum, did nothing to improve the long-term security in that particular area.

During Operation Together Forward, the Bush administration sent additional troops to Baghdad. The U.S.

military spokesman, General William Caldwell, stated this effort was a failure and had “not met our overall expectations for sustaining a reduction in the level of violence.”

Each of these instances has something in common. Each failed to improve the long-term security situation and the violence and death toll, which continues to rise. Even the Commander of U.S. Central Command has testified that top military commanders in Iraq do not believe increasing the number of troops is the right approach. He stated, in fact, more American forces prevent the Iraqis from doing more, from taking more of their own responsibility.

We know the solution is not to send more troops to Iraq without a real plan to secure the peace. Fifty-five percent of Americans do not believe more troops can secure Baghdad, and 59 percent of Americans want redeployment of American forces, this includes two-thirds of the Latino population, who want our troops brought home. A study done by the Pew Hispanic Center found that 75 percent of Latinos now believe that the U.S. made the wrong choice in using military force in Iraq.

Americans, as you know, voted November 7 for a new direction in Iraq, and we must deliver that promise. Our Nation needs a policy to secure and stabilize Iraq, one that constructively engages in diplomacy and partners with our neighbors there. We need a plan that ensures that there are no permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq and a plan to decrease the U.S. presence there. We need a plan which investigates and punishes companies like Halliburton engaged in war profiteering and fraud, like the \$1.4 billion in unreasonable and unsupported charges by Halliburton which the Defense Contract Audit Agency identified.

We need a policy and a plan to put welfare of our service men and women first so that they come home, rejoin their families and receive the care that they deserve. This should also include services for all of our veterans, both men and women.

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

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

ESCALATION OF TROOPS IN IRAQ

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

Ms. WATERS. Mr. Speaker and Members, I come to the floor of the House this evening in advance of the President’s speech that is scheduled for, I think, 9 p.m. this evening, where the President is going to announce his new

approach to dealing with the debacle that he has created in Iraq. He has coined it, “New Way Forward.” He has referred to it as a surge, but we all know what this is. This is an escalation.

The President of the United States is probably going to announce that the surge has already started. There are reports in the news already that about 90 advanced troops from the 82nd Airborne will arrive in Baghdad today, I believe. And so this so-called surge that the President has begun is one that is taking place without the support of the American people, without the support of many of the Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle.

Americans, and elected officials, in particular, are sick and tired of being misled, of not being told the truth, and trying to explain to our constituents what this war in Iraq is all about. Americans, basically, have come to the conclusion that this war has been mismanaged, that they have not been told the truth, that there were no weapons of destruction.

Oh, there were promises made. We were told by Mr. Rumsfeld that we would be welcomed with open arms; we would be seen as the liberators. The Iraqis see us as occupiers, and they want us out of their country.

We were told that we didn’t have to worry about the cost of this war because there would be profits from the oil in Iraq that would not only help pay for the war but it would help to reconstruct the damage that has been done to Iraq by the occupation.

Oh, we were told not only would we have oil resources that would repay or pay for some of this damage, we were told that enough troops were going to be, Iraqi troops were going to be trained and that the numbers were growing and that they would soon be able to take over the security of Iraq.

None of that has happened. As a matter of fact, what we are finding is that our troops are being deserted in times of crisis and confrontation by Iraqi soldiers, that they are being undermined, oftentimes, by Iraqi soldiers, and that our troops don’t know a Shiite from a Sunni from a Kurd. And they are very much so in harm’s way because they really don’t know what they are fighting, why they are fighting and why they are in Iraq.

But this President plans on sending about 24,000 U.S. troops to Iraq. Five brigades of U.S. troops, about 20,000 soldiers will be deployed to Baghdad to suppress sectarian violence. An additional 4,000 troops will be sent to the Anwar Province to pursue insurgents.

Responsibility for security, he says, in all of the country’s provinces will be turned over to Iraqi forces by November 2007. Oh, haven’t we heard those kinds of promises before.

How can we put any faith in the President of the United States, the Commander-in-Chief, who first refused to send adequate numbers into the war? They were being told by their

commanders and their generals that they needed more troops, but, no, Mr. Rumsfeld convinced, I suppose, this President that we didn’t need it, and so we didn’t send them. And now, at the 12th hour, we are talking about sending more troops.

It is too late. It is too late to have this escalation. We have lost. We have mismanaged. We have created an untenable situation, and there is a civil war going on in Iraq, and we can’t manage it. We cannot undo the harm that we have created, and it does not make good sense to send our troops into harm’s way.

Not only is our Commander-in-Chief sending more troops, the length of Army deployments will be increased from 12 months to 15 months. Marine deployment will be increased to 12 months from 7 months. In addition, the amount of time they spend at home to rest before returning to Iraq will be shortened.

Mr. President, mothers, fathers and families want their children and their relatives home.

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

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

THE PRESIDENT’S TROOP SURGE IS TANTAMOUNT TO AN ESCALATION OF THE IRAQ WAR AND WILL NOT MAKE AMERICA OR IRAQ SAFER

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. Mr. Speaker, let me thank you for your leadership and presence during this important debate and discussion.

I almost don’t know where to start. Because when you begin to discuss the issue of Iraq, you must be very cautious.

One, the constitutional premise is that the President is the Commander-in-Chief. The immediate inquiries of the press of how are you going to translate the vote of the American people into action, you are just the Congress; the Commander-in-Chief has every right to command the troops. And might I say that this President has commanded the troops. As I visited Afghanistan and Iraq, every one of those soldiers has stood up and said, I was willing to come and follow the orders of my Commander-in-Chief. I respect them, thank them, thank their families.

That is why I feel a special obligation to begin to renew the energy and the outrage that many of us expressed during the debate of 2002 when we had hoped that we would have secured