

to police the streets, on bounty-seeking contractors to guard important sites such as the oil wells, and foreign nationals to carry out internal security operations in Iraq. I don't call that the freedom the President talked about last night.

Iraqis have proposed dividing Baghdad into nine sectors and policing them with Iraqi troops as American soldiers are redeployed as backups. That might work. But the U.S. most of all needs a broad political strategy that addresses the rising levels of global terrorism the Bush policy is yielding and the growing anti-American sentiment that is brewing in Iraq and the Muslim world beyond.

That strategy demands significant new human intelligence networks, not standing armies. Moreover, we need international diplomacy to engage all nations that border Iraq to seek a resolution to the strife.

Mr. Speaker, America needs a foreign policy that does not put the interests of oil and oil dictatorships above the value of human life. Just as the Bush administration took office, this country is importing an additional 1 billion more barrels of oil per year. Tell me there is no connection between our utter dependence on imported petroleum and the deployment of our precious troops to the Middle East and Central Asia.

STOP MILITARY CASUALTIES

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 and Members of the House, last night the President spoke to the Nation and presented his proposal to the Nation to increase the troop levels an additional 20,000 troops to be sent to Iraq to continue the war in Iraq. What the President didn't do was lay out the plan of how that would be successful, how that would be different than what we are currently doing, and how the results would be different.

The President, with his initial decision to invade Iraq, a decision that was his choice, and this was not a war of necessity, this was not a war to protect the vital interests of the United States, or the integrity of the United States or the safety of our homeland, this was a war where the President chose to go to war.

At the time he was considering going to war, he was advised by many. We all know this history of many saying not to do this and also saying that this would not work in Iraq with its history, with its culture, with its religious differences. But the President chose to go anyway, and we have been there now for 3 years. Over 3,000 young Americans have paid with their lives for this endeavor, and over 20,000 have been wounded, seriously wounded.

I have had the honor to visit with many of those soldiers as they have re-

turned to Walter Reed Hospital with life-changing, life-changing wounds. It is remarkable that they would survive them at all, a great testimony to the medical care that is available to them, but nevertheless, life-changing injuries for these young men and women.

Now the President is suggesting, with his plan for escalation, that we will send another 20,000. The fact of the matter is that American soldiers have done all that they can for the Iraqi people. The Iraqi people, the Iraqi Government, has chosen not to take advantage of having the Americans in the country to resolve their political differences, to resolve their differences of culture and religion. They have chosen to continue to fight.

In fact, we find that our soldiers more and more now are simply the targets within the civil war that is going on in Iraq; and for all intents and purposes there is no reason to suggest that that is going to change. The President has suggested that somehow the current Iraqi Government will have to meet some thresholds.

Those thresholds are absolutely contrary to the interest of that government in terms of their survival. It is asking for a betrayal of that government against its Shi'a base, and it fails to recognize how fundamental, how fundamental the clash is between the Sunnis and the Shi'a, not just in Iraq, but throughout this region. If the President had taken time before the invasion, he might have been able to understand that. But it is a fundamental clash between these two factions in Islam.

Because of the actions of this President, he has unleashed the ability of that clash to present very real rewards and very high stakes for either sides. It is not just the oil in Iraq or the governance in Iraq, but it is really about the ability of the Shi'a to spread their influence beyond Iran, to spread their influence beyond being a majority minority in Iraq, to spread their influence beyond being a minority in Lebanon or in Syria; and these are fundamental, and they go back a long time in the history in the clashes between Sunni and Shi'a and how the Shi'a have been treated in countries where they are a minority whether it is in Jordan or whether it is in Saudi Arabia or other countries in the peninsula.

This is very, very fundamental, and the stakes are very high. At this moment our troops are a pawn in that game, in spite of what the President suggests that this is about the security of the region, this is about the blooming of democracy. It is not about any of that any longer. It may have been in his mind when he signed the order to send these troops to Iraq; but the fact of the matter is, it has been overwhelmed by history, by culture, by the nature of the region, all of which he made worse by this disastrous decision of his to choose to go to war in Iraq.

The idea now that contrary to the overwhelming desire of the American

people to disengage from this area, and of this Congress that he would go forward, is arrogance that is so dangerous, so dangerous to our country, our standing in the world, and our troops in the region that immediately action should be taken in this Congress to stop this President from going forward with this very dangerous escalation that will do nothing more than add to the list of casualties by American soldiers in this region.

BRING OUR TROOPS HOME

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

Mr. HALL of New York. Mr. Speaker, before being sworn in, I was home in my district for a couple of weeks doing a listening tour traveling around the five counties that I represent, and I had dozens of my constituents come up to me and say, Please bring them home, bring our troops home.

I didn't have one person in my district in New York come up to me and say, Please send more over there.

I am proud and honored and humbled, and I must say saddened at the same time, at the prospect that as a member of the Veterans' Affairs committee of this House that I will be able and be responsible to help returning veterans from this war deal with their physical, psychological, economic, housing and other problems.

It is an honor. It is an important service to provide. But what is a shame is that we are creating so many more veterans that have so much more grievous problems, that this war is producing injuries that in previous wars might not have been survivable.

The good news is that the soldiers, our servicemen and -women, are surviving in greater numbers. The bad news is that when they come home, they have to deal with much longer periods of rehabilitation or much more serious injuries and limitations on their mobility and on their other physical capabilities.

I am reminded, standing here, of the State of the Union address 3 years ago when Ahmed Chalabi was sitting in the Presidential box next to the First Lady. At the time he was the fair-haired boy that we had picked out of Iraq to stake our hopes for creating a government in our image and likeness and our country on. So no longer is it Chalabi; it is Maliki.

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The President is telling us we can to take his word and trust that he can produce 18 brigades to spread out across the country and to work side by side with our troops.

I am not so sure that 18 brigades that are reliable and independently-functioning of Iraqi Army and police actually exist. I am also not so sure that in another couple of years it won't be somebody else besides Maliki; that

there will be a new Prime Minister that we will be told we should stake our hopes on.

There was a front-page story in the Baltimore Sun yesterday that said that 20,000-some new troops heading to Iraq will have to go with the old, lesser armored vehicles, the flat-bottomed HMMWVs, because the new V-hulled transports that deflect the power of a roadside bomb or a land mine are not available in sufficient numbers because the money has not been available to bring the production lines up to where they need to be to have them ready.

It just bespeaks of the same incompetent planning, the same lack of thorough thinking of the problem through that leaves us with six fluent Arabic-speaking translators in the embassy according to the Baker-Hamilton Report.

If you believe our national intelligence estimate from this past fall that says all 16 of our intelligence agencies in this country report that so far the Iraq war has created more terrorists than it has disposed of, where is the logic in continuing that war? Where is the logic in escalating that war?

I would like to see a surge of interpreters and a surge of religious and historical experts in the region and a surge of trained negotiators, and I would like to see a surge of diplomacy, of us treating other countries as sovereigns and talking to them. There are a couple of examples of that working.

One might remember, for instance, a President from the other side of the aisle from me, President Reagan going to South Africa which at the time was a rogue state that had nuclear weapons, and I was on the side that was saying, Let's sanction them. Let's not talk to them. And let's cut off all interaction. And what he called constructive engagement was sending ballet troupes and sending artists and having as much commercial and cultural exchange as possible to bring them to our way of thinking. It worked in that case, a nuclear power disarmed. And I would like to see that kind of emphasis and diplomacy returned to our country's foreign policy.

ESCALATION OF TROOPS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, the Nation brought in the new year by marking a somber milestone: the 3,000th fallen American combatant in Iraq. In response, the President proposes to send even more of a failed and dangerous policy.

How much more heartbreak must American families suffer before the President comes to see what the rest of the Nation has long known: His Iraq policy is an utter failure, one that makes our country less and less secure

with each passing day, all at the expense of the flower of our youth. How long before the President realizes that each fallen soldier, sailor, aviator, and marine is a valuable, cherished human being and not just a checkmark on a deployment order? How long will President Bush continue to ignore the demands of American voters who have clearly demanded a new direction?

Mr. President, I have asked before and I will ask again now: Why?

These policies of escalation have been tried in the past in Iraq. The results speak for themselves: 3,000 brave men and women return home in body bags, their families and friends left with nothing but memories; over 22,000 more returning home injured, their lives never the same.

America's credibility around the world and its domestic security have been dangerously eroded. We have plunged Iraq into a civil war, further destabilizing an already precarious region. All this while, at home the civil rights of American citizens are slowly being degraded, often without congressional oversight.

On November 7, 2006, the American people spoke loud and clear. They demanded a new direction.

This escalation is not a new direction. It is a slap in the face to all Americans. And the fact that the President began committing new troops in Iraq before Congress had a chance to respond to his new plan is an insult to this body and an insult to the people who elected us to lead our country in a new direction.

Mr. President, you have claimed that you wanted to start this year off in a spirit of bipartisanship and collegiality. As an equal partner, Congress deserves it, America deserves it and, most importantly, our troops deserve it.

THE WAR IN IRAQ NEEDS TO END, NOT ESCALATE

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

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, last night President Bush told the American people that he bore responsibility for the many mistakes made in the prosecution of the war in Iraq. Then he announced that he planned to make another mistake: He planned to escalate and expand the war in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, the President said he intends to send more than 20,000 U.S. service men and women into Iraq and indefinitely. As has been the case with so many military strategic and diplomatic decisions made by this President regarding Iraq, tragically, this too would be a terrible error. This open-ended commitment of more U.S. troops will result in the death and wounding of thousands more American soldiers, cost U.S. taxpayers tens of billions of dollars more, and do nothing to help the Iraqi people resolve their civil war.

In fact, this escalation will turn up the heat on the already boiling anti-American fanaticism in Iraq and in the region.

The President's plan also weakens our severely overstretched and depleted military, and it limits our ability to face the current and future conflicts, future threats to our country.

In summary, President Bush's escalation and expansion of the war in Iraq will hurt America's national security, and I will work with all of my colleagues here to do all that we can to make sure that the President's plan does not get allowed to be funded.

Our country has sacrificed deeply to help the Iraqi people already by removing their murderous dictator Saddam Hussein from power, by training their military, spending billions of our money to rebuild their infrastructure, and by supporting them so that they could develop a democratic government.

If we owed the Iraqi people a moral obligation after we deposed their dictator and started this war, Mr. Speaker, we have long since met that moral obligation.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, the United States must now simply, but importantly, remove all of our troops from Iraq without delay. We must rebuild our military and let the world know that we are ready to counter the real threats to our national security, current and future.

Let me add one more thing, Mr. Speaker. I am delighted that my friend and colleague MAXINE WATERS from California will be engaging in a Special Order on Iraq and the necessity for withdrawing our troops from Iraq. I am unable to participate in that Special Order and look forward to participating and working with her under her leadership in the very near future.

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 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 Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana 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 California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ROHRABACHER 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 Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) is recognized for 5 minutes.