

Nations would be of enormous political impact on the people of Iran. A ban on selling Iran refined petroleum products would dislocate its economy and bring enormous popular pressure on the Government of Iran, because although Iran exports petroleum, it doesn't have the refining capacity—and therefore is dependent on imports for almost half of its gasoline.

So how do we get these very extreme U.N. Security Council sanctions? Only with a dramatic change in Russia's policy.

Now, our current approach to securing that critical Russian support has been very ineffective, and we have achieved only token sanctions that Tehran can laugh off.

The only way to get the kind of Russian support we need is by offering real changes on our policy toward issues in Russia's own geographic region—issues Russia cares a lot about, issues not of great significance to most of us in the United States. Our efforts to convince Russia to change its Iran policy only because, well, they ought to do it, have been remarkably unsuccessful. We need to address Russia's concerns to change their policy toward Iran's nuclear weapons.

In particular, we may need to offer to make modest changes in our policies towards such issues as the Russian-speaking peoples of Moldova, Latvia and Estonia, the route of Caspian Sea oil pipelines, and Chechnya and Abkhazia.

Now, the State Department bureaucracy is prejudiced towards this approach for three reasons: First, a bureaucracy has bureaus, and they have got an Abkhazia bureau that doesn't want its interests sacrificed for some more important national security priority. Second, there are those in the administration with such an almost faith-based excessive estimate of our national power. They think we can achieve all of our national objectives and that we don't have to sacrifice or delay any of them. Finally, many of America's foreign policy experts grew up in the Soviet era. They spent their time strategizing how to encircle and weaken Russia. And, Madam Speaker, old habits die hard.

Nothing is more important to America's national security than an all-out diplomatic effort to prevent Iran from developing nuclear weapons.

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

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas 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. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCHIFF 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. PENCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

RECOUNTING REASONS FOR VOTING IN FAVOR OF 2002 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING USE OF MILITARY FORCE IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of today, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the President began talking about going to war with Iraq. In the fall of 2002, with the midterm elections heating up, the President increasingly talked about the threat Iraq poses to the United States and its allies. On October 10, 2002, the House voted on H.J. Res. 114, the Authorization For Use of Military Force Against Iraq resolution. It passed the House by a vote of 296–133: 215 Republicans voted for the resolution, 6 voted against it, 81 Democrats voted for it, and 126 voted against it.

Madam Speaker, in light of what many of our Members know today, they perhaps would not have voted for that resolution. As a matter of fact, day in and day out as I talk with my colleagues, they recount all of that which was told to us by the President of the United States and others on the opposite side of the aisle, for the most part, about why it was so important to go to war with Iraq.

They told us there were weapons of mass destruction. They told us that the troop levels that they were sending were necessary. They told us about the cost of the war. They told us that oil revenues would be paying for the reconstruction. They told us we would be greeted as liberators. They told us we would be able to contain sectarian violence.

Well, Madam Speaker, I have colleagues that are here this evening who will recount perhaps some of what they were being told and the way they trusted the Commander in Chief, they trusted our President. They were concerned about the safety and the security of our Nation.

So we have with us tonight some of the brightest, most hardworking, most respected Members of the Congress of the United States. They are going to remind us of what we were being told and how they came to their decision and what they are thinking now.

Leading that discussion will be my dear friend from Missouri, that is my hometown, my birthplace, who I have gotten to know very well. He is the Chair of one of the most important committees of this House, the Armed Services Committee, a highly respected gentleman, Representative IKE SKELTON.

I yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. SKELTON. Madam Speaker, I thank my friend originally from Missouri for yielding this time.

Last year, I had the opportunity to visit the Joint Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. After a ceremony there, I went into the library, and in the glassed-off section for old and rare books I found a book printed in 1926 about the 1915 British misadventure at Gallipoli, entitled "The Perils of Amateur Strategy." I have often thought regarding the situation in Iraq that we face today that this administration is not giving food for thought to some author to write a book entitled "The Perils of Amateur Strategy II."

The issue before us this evening is what would we have done, had we known what we know today. Had that been the case, we probably would never have had a resolution before us, much less voted in favor of it.

We have a wonderful military, the finest we have ever had and the finest in modern history. The young men and young women are dedicated, they are professional and they are volunteers, whether they be active duty, whether they be National Guard or Reserve. Gosh, I am proud of them. I have been with them aboard ship; I have been with them in their training. I have been with them in Iraq and Afghanistan and had the privilege of spending Christmas Day with them in Baghdad. But I wonder where all of this ends.

They moved the goalposts on us. The first goal was to make sure that weapons of mass destruction were not there, then to establish a democracy, and now to bring stability to Iraq. And those goalposts keep moving.

I am truly concerned about where we have been and much more concerned about where we go in Iraq. Whatever happens there, and I feel that there is no positive outcome for this, the star of this show will be the young men and young women who wear the uniform of the United States. History will treat them well and our gratitude should go toward them.

There are some mistakes that are made that are irretrievable. There have been such mistakes that we have made in Iraq. The first, of course, was going in with the intelligence that at least was available, not having a plan in use, despite the fact that there was a plan available. Lieutenant General Jay Gardner asked for the people to help draw it up and was finally given one person from the State Department. But the plan was not allowed to be used.

Looting was allowed, and then we dismissed those who belonged to the Baathist Party, who made the trains run and the local government run. Some thousands of school teachers were put out of jobs. Then the army was dismissed, rather than giving them a paycheck and a shovel and the opportunity to help bring security and stability to that torn country.

The military ammunition, weapons and caches, were not guarded. In September of 2003, JOHN SPRATT, ROBIN HAYES and I were told by David Kay that there were 50-some-odd caches that went unguarded, and the truth in fact is there were many, many more. That is where the insurgents got their weapons and ammunition to use against our young people.

We fought the insurgents, the Baathists, criminals, foreigners and al Qaeda helping the insurgency, and then more recently the sectarian violence that overlays all of the insurgency that is going on; and we are there trying to bring stability to that torn land.

□ 1945

I am hoping for a positive outcome. It is dark and misty as to where we are going today. I am hoping lightning will strike for the benefit of our young people who are there.

It is having serious implications in our readiness which we will explore and talk about and hope to rectify to some extent in the Armed Services Committee.

All of these areas, I think, are irretrievable, and I am hopeful that in the days ahead there will be some light at the end of the tunnel in this very sad misadventure in Iraq.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentleman, and before the gentleman leaves the microphone, would you please confirm for me that did you not have a son that served or is serving in Iraq?

Mr. SKELTON. That is correct.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you so much.

Mr. SKELTON. I appreciate the gentlewoman making reference. As you know, I am very, very proud of all three of our sons, two of whom are in uniform, and I do not speak about them other than just to be proud of them.

Ms. WATERS. Thank you so very much. We appreciate your service, we appreciate your work, and we appreciate the fact that you sit here every day trying to manage this most important problem and crisis that we have and the fact that you have your son who is put at great risk. Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER), who is a member of the Armed Services Committee, who is the chair of the New Democrats, one of the hardest working members of the California delegation who will present.

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Madam Speaker, let me first thank my friend and colleague from California for her passion and her presence and for her leadership and also my other colleague BARBARA LEE and for LYNN WOOLSEY and so many of my colleagues who have been indefatigable, unrelenting and brilliant in their insistence that we continue to put pressure on the administration and the President specifically for the litany of mistakes that have been made in Iraq, but at the same time holding

deeply in our hearts the fighting men and women that come from all of our neighborhoods, come from all of our communities. For your patriotism, I cannot thank you enough. For your leadership and friendship, I will always be indebted.

Madam Speaker, I cannot and will not support putting more American troops on the ground in Iraq. I stand here today more convinced than ever that the President's so-called new plan to send over 21,000 additional American troops to Iraq will only lead to further chaos.

My opposition to this troop surge is built upon years of hearings in the House Armed Services Committee, where I serve as subcommittee chairman of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee, congressional briefings and five trips to the region, including three to Iraq, witnessing the war firsthand and speaking with our troops and commanders on the ground.

Sadly, the President has gotten it very wrong every step of the way. Yet he continues to ask us to trust him.

When the Republican-controlled Congress was rushing a vote to authorize the war in the middle of 2002's campaign season, I joined my friend DENNIS KUCINICH to call on the Republican leadership to take the politics out of the vote, take the decision to send our troops into harm's way seriously and postpone the vote until after the election.

We wrote to our colleagues in October of 2002: "It is incumbent upon us to address the matters of national security and decisions through the reasoned and deliberate process afforded us by our Constitution. This becomes particularly important when these decisions could possibly mean putting our young servicemen and women in harm's way. This is not a process that can be rushed for the sake of political expediency."

Our best attempts failed. Congress was rushed to a vote, and we had no opportunity to sort through what we now know was the Bush administration's personal collection of cherry-picked or just plain false intelligence.

The President made it clear that he wanted to rush to invade Iraq and prevent international weapons inspectors from finishing their job.

I spoke out at the time saying, "We must consider every peaceful alternative and contemplate every possible outcome before we turn to force."

Our warnings were again ignored. In February of 2003, I co-authored legislation that would have required the President to submit a public report to Congress prior to initiating military action in Iraq.

Our bill said: "The United States should not proceed with unilateral or preemptive military action in Iraq, but if we do have to go to war to disarm Saddam, Congress needs to be sure there are sensible plans that will not compromise our ability to prosecute the War on Terror elsewhere or further destabilize an already volatile region."

That same month, when then-Secretary of State Colin Powell presented the United Nations with the Bush administration's case on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, I again said, "I continue to believe that the United States should not proceed with unilateral or preemptive military action."

After the invasion, I remained concerned about the Bush administration's rush to war, and in July 2003 I authored legislation to create a select committee to hold public hearings to investigate several aspects of intelligence, including whether intelligence supported the claim that Iraq was an imminent threat to the United States, questioning the accuracy of intelligence that led the administration to believe Iraq was working with al Qaeda, and questioning the role of the Office of Special Plans in the Pentagon.

The Republican-controlled Congress at the time would not allow my bill to see the light of day.

In September 2003, the President requested an additional \$87 billion to finance the war. In response, I authored legislation calling for explanations, noting that "President Bush has not yet provided Congress with a detailed plan that outlines the strategic objectives of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

I have sent dozens of letters to the President, Secretary Rice, Secretary Rumsfeld and others over the past 4½ years urging them to explain our mission and exit strategy for Iraq. I have offered suggestions to stabilize Iraq and bring our troops home sooner. Yet I have received few answers.

Last week, I watched the President plead his case to the American people, trying to justify why more troops will save his failed policy. But yet again I was disappointed by the stubbornness exhibited by a President that has failed in Iraq every step of the way.

I have stated throughout the timeline of the war that the Commander-in-Chief has the responsibility to define a well-articulated mission that has the support of the American people and an exit strategy to bring our troops home sooner and safer. The President has neither.

Top military commanders in Iraq, the bipartisan Iraq Study Group and the American people all agree that sending more troops to Iraq will not end the civil war. They understand that we should immediately begin a strategic redeployment of U.S. troops in conjunction with diplomacy that forces Iraq's neighbors to step up as responsible regional partners.

Adding additional troops further prevents the Iraqi government from taking responsibility for securing their own country. If the President sidesteps the Congress, he does this at his own peril, and sadly, he does it with the men and women of our Armed Forces and their families paying the highest price.

This is why I am an original cosponsor of the Meehan legislation that requires the President to ask Congress

for an up-or-down vote if he plans to raise troop levels in Iraq.

I am not advocating cutting funds for the troops while they are in harm's way, but I am an advocate of conditioning all further spending for the Iraq War based on the Iraqis meeting security and political benchmarks and establishing a plan for the redeployment of our troops.

I will continue to challenge the President to abandon his flawed troop surge policy, and I urge all of my colleagues to do the same. We owe it to our troops, to the American people and to our conscience.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentlewoman from California, not only for the statement that she has made this evening, but I believe that you are an example of one of our highly respected Members of Congress who trusted the President, who believed what he was saying when he offered all of the reasons why we should be going into the war, and to have lost your support, I think, is the kind of significance that everyone should have an appreciation for.

We have come to that point in time where supporters who believed in the President are now withdrawing their support and urging him to abandon the failed policies that took us into that war.

Next, I would like to yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. WYNN). He is a member of the Energy and Commerce Committee, another one of our respected Members in this House who supported the Commander-in-Chief when he brought to us all of the flawed evidence, that we did not know was flawed at that time, and he has taken a lot of criticism for it, but he certainly has clarified his understanding now and he has a statement that he would like to bring forward this evening. I yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

Mr. WYNN. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank first the gentlewoman from California for yielding, and also for her consistent, aggressive and activist leadership on this issue. She has been very courageous throughout. She has always taken a principled position, and she is now leading our efforts to stand up and express our opposition to the President. I want to thank her for that.

Sometimes one of the most difficult things for a politician or elected official to do is to say I was wrong; I made a mistake. I am here to say that tonight.

After 9/11, after the Pentagon was attacked in addition to New York, my district, which is just outside of Washington, D.C., felt the effects very severely. A lot of my constituents worked in the Pentagon. I went to several funerals, and I was very sensitive to the fact that my constituents in suburban Washington, D.C., in Montgomery County and in Prince Georges County, as Federal workers, were very vulnerable to an attack in what is ar-

guably the number one or the number two target of terrorists in the United States.

I represent 72,000 Federal employees, most of whom work right here in the Nation's capital, in the immediate Capitol complex area.

At that time, the President was presenting, as the gentlewoman mentioned, extensive evidence about the existence of weapons of mass destruction, about attempts to develop a nuclear arsenal, about chemical and biological warfare, and I was of the belief that the President, on issues of national security, would put politics aside and would consider only the best interests of the country. Boy, was I wrong.

It has turned out and become evident to everyone that the President's intelligence was seriously flawed. It was inaccurate, it was distorted, and it was exaggerated to create a false impression of urgency that this country had an urgent threat and that weapons of mass destruction, in fact, existed and that they posed a threat to the citizens of the United States and, in my consideration, a threat to my constituents here in the Washington metropolitan area.

We were shown classified information, documents, photographs and the like, all of which were designed to create the impression that we were facing an imminent threat. Assuming the President would not mislead the country, I supported the war. That was a mistake.

But then it came to pass and became increasingly evident that there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and that we were not facing an imminent threat. So in May of 2004, in an appearance before the Muslim Council in my district, I said I think my vote was wrong; I think my vote was a mistake.

Subsequent to that, I heard people say, well, what about the fact that we toppled Saddam Hussein? Well, that was a laudable goal, but it was not worth 3,000 troops. Well, what about the fact we created elections and they put their finger in purple ink and they had elections for the first time? I said I agree, that, too, is a laudable goal, but that was not worth 3,000 troops.

If you had asked me then to make this decision based on what I know now, I would not have voted to support the use of troops.

□ 2000

Because, you see, there are a lot of dictators in the world, some of whom we not only deal with, some of whom we actually arm. There are a lot of dictators that are cruel, that murder their own people, that violate human rights. There are a lot of countries that don't have democratic processes. And yet we do not make the decision that we ought to engage with them militarily. So to my way of thinking, the only justification, the only justification would have been the existence of weapons of

mass destruction and an imminent threat to the United States that in fact did not exist.

What we have in fact seen is that our military presence has worsened the situation. Areas that did not have terrorists now have terrorists. They are called breeding grounds for terrorism because our presence creates a cause for the terrorists, a motivation, if you will, a catalyst, an antagonism. That is not solving the problem of terrorism. That is not effectively fighting the war on terrorism. Our military role has not been productive and effective; in fact, it is been counterproductive and sadly ineffective.

It is time to withdraw our troops. We need to begin now to withdraw our troops so that the Iraqis will take more responsibility for their own security. In fact, Mr. Maliki says that is what he wants us to do. He says, "Give us the weapons, we will do it." He is not so excited about having us. Clearly, the American people don't want to be in Iraq. More importantly, the Iraqi people don't want us to be in Iraq. It is time for us to pull out. We are in the midst of a civil war, one that we cannot resolve, and therefore we are not playing a constructive role.

We are now on the eve of another adventure in Iraq or, should I say, misadventure, in which the President is proposing not to withdraw but just the opposite, contrary to the recommendations of the joint chiefs, contrary to the recommendations of the Iraqi Study Group. The President is saying, Let's send more troops. He calls it a surge. Folks, it is a troop escalation and an escalation of this war, and I will oppose it.

There is a saying that the old folks used to say: Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.

Mr. President, you fooled me once. Shame on you. Fool me twice? I don't think so.

I am opposed to any troop escalation. I am opposed to any surge. I am opposed to any expansion of this war by military means. Yes, we have to fight the war on terrorism, but it seems to me we need to use diplomatic means to create an environment in which we can promote peace. We need to involve the other countries in the region, be it Shia or be it Sunni, who have an interest in a stable region. It is their region. They don't want war as a way of life in their region. Let's involve those countries, the Egyptians, the Jordans, the Saudi Arabias. Let them get engaged in helping resolve this war. Let us step back from this war. We need to implement diplomatic solutions.

So this is not a question of withdrawing United States leadership. We need to leave, but we need to leave diplomatically. We need to understand that, in the modern world, the use of military force is extremely limited, limited in its utility, because we are operating in a different environment, a terrorist environment, an insurgent environment in which additional troops

only work for a temporary period of time. The insurgency withdraws, melts away, and then reemerges, which is to say, the President's proposal can only lead to a permanent U.S. presence of even more troops, putting them in harm's way.

We have lost over 3,000 troops. The Iraqi people have lost tens of thousands more, maybe even hundreds of thousands. It is time to withdraw our military presence. It is time to advance the cause of peace through diplomatic means and diplomatic leadership.

I want to thank the gentlewoman again for giving me this opportunity to speak.

Ms. WATERS. I would like to thank the gentleman for that very clear statement as one who voted to support.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would remind Members to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Ms. WATERS. Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman for that very clear statement as one who supported the war in Iraq who has withdrawn that support and is sharing with others his feelings about why he supported it and why he no longer supports it.

Madam Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from California, one of my colleagues on the financial services committee, Representative BRAD SHERMAN.

Mr. SHERMAN. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

I remember well the debate on this floor in 2002 about whether to give the President the power he sought to take military action, if necessary, against Saddam Hussein. But before that resolution even came to this floor, we considered it in the International Relations Committee. There, we were told that the administration would invade Iraq only if the inspectors were not allowed to do their job. In fact, Secretary Powell told us that before the whole committee. Then he told me that privately.

Now, I did not completely trust the administration. So in committee I offered a resolution that would allow the use of force only if the inspectors were not allowed to do their job. A majority of Democrats in the committee voted for that resolution. The Republicans pretty much all voted against it; and it was defeated.

Then we all came to this floor, and Mr. SPRATT of South Carolina put forward a resolution that would allow the President to use military force, but only under certain circumstances, such as force being authorized by the United Nations. I voted for Mr. SPRATT's resolution. Unfortunately, it was defeated.

And, finally, the supporters of the President were able to say that there was only one last resolution before us: either we gave the power to the President that he sought, but that he promised to use only if the inspectors were expelled or prevented from doing their job, or we left ourselves in a position

where Saddam was free to expel the inspectors and to go all out with his weapons of mass destruction program.

At that point, I voted for an overly broad resolution, a resolution that gave the President more power than he claimed he would use, or gave him power to act under circumstances all under when he said that he would act only under a limited number of circumstances. That of course is not what happened.

The President took that power, made little or no attempt to ensure the inspectors were allowed to do their job, dismissed them, in effect pulled them out of Iraq, and invaded at an early opportunity. Obviously, if I knew then how the President would use the power granted by this Congress, I never would have voted to give him that power.

Not only did he invade even though the inspectors were then able to do their job and, as it turned out, they were right, there were no weapons of mass destruction—but then, in secret briefings on this floor, we had been told (and this has been reported in press, I am not revealing anything), that the plan was to invade Iraq from the north and from the south, so as to take control of the country quickly. What happened was that Turkey at the last minute declared that our troops couldn't go through Turkey, and our best division was sitting there in the middle of the Mediterranean.

So we had a plan. The plan had been previewed to those of us in Congress. The plan involved our best division. (I will just say one of our best divisions; I don't want to cast anything but total glory on all our divisions.) But one of our best divisions was left sitting in the Mediterranean. Now, you would think if you had a plan and you couldn't execute the plan, you would go draft a new plan. Instead, they just took the northern half of the plan and threw it away and implemented the southern half of the plan. Needless to say, we did not take immediate control of Baghdad. Needless to say, there was chaos. And the rest is history.

But there are a host of other mistakes made by the Bush administration. They were detailed by the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON). They included an inadequate number of troops at the beginning; disbanding the Iraqi Army when the Saudis, who have some understanding of the area, had advised us to do the exact opposite; not guarding the arms depots; and a host of other problems.

Now we are being asked to authorize a surge. An escalation is the real word. And we are told that this is critical because Iraq is the central front in the war on terrorism. Well, is that really true?

We are told that Iraq could become a place where terrorists could meet and plot. Today they are meeting and plotting in North Waziristan, in much of Afghanistan, in much of Somalia, pretty much anywhere they want in Iran and in Syria and Sudan. They have

plenty of places to meet and plot. How many Americans are supposed to die on the theory that denying the terrorists one place to meet will prevent them from meeting in all the places they are meeting today?

Then we are told that there will be a humanitarian debacle in Iraq. And, again, the prognosis for Iraq is not particularly good, but it is by no means clear that we have not done all we can be expected to do to help the people of Iraq avoid a civil war and achieve unity. And at some point it may be necessary to say that Iraq's decisions need to be made by the Iraqis.

Keep in mind that during Saddam's tenure, year in and year out, he killed far more people than have been killed in the time since we invaded. We have bestowed upon the Iraqi people not just the pain and suffering that they have now, but also freedom from a Saddam Hussein who in prior decades had killed not the thousands we see being killed now but hundreds of thousands and millions. Our moral responsibility to the Iraqi people was to do what was reasonable to help them reestablish order. I think we have met much of our moral responsibility. We can do more by providing economic and other aid. And we should keep in mind that Iraq is just one of many places in the world suffering great humanitarian crises.

Finally, we are told that we are going to empower and overjoy the terrorists if they see us leave Iraq or see us fail to surge into Iraq. Keep in mind, the smarter terrorists are thrilled to have us pinned down there, and to have us bled dry there.

But, finally, even if all these things being put forward by the administration are true, even if withdrawal from Iraq or failure to surge into Iraq gives terrorists a place to gather, sets the stage for humanitarian crisis, and overjoys the terrorists, there is no evidence that we are now doing anything but delaying the inevitable by surging over the next few months, or escalating over the next few months. So since we are by no means winning or prevailing, surging is just doing more of the same.

The President has asked us to compare the Global War on Radical Islam with the Cold War, and I think it is an apt comparison. Iraq has some real similarities to Vietnam. And the one thing we all remember about Vietnam is being told that if we didn't prevail in Vietnam, the communists would be on the beaches in Santa Monica. What did we finally do? We withdrew from Vietnam, and doing so was a critical step in winning the Cold War just 15 years later.

I would say that we should pick our own battlefields, we should learn from the Vietnam mistake, and we should recognize that the way to beat radical Islam may be to recognize that Iraq is not the central front and that we have to do a lot of things in a lot of places in the world, and cannot allow ourselves to be utterly fixated on Iraq.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentleman from California. And I yield to the gentleman from New Jersey, Representative STEVE ROTHMAN, who serves on the Appropriations Committee, he is on the Subcommittee on Defense, and on the Subcommittee For Foreign Operations. This is not the first evening he has been on the floor; he has made it clear, but he even goes further tonight in helping to clarify and make it known where he stands on this war.

Mr. ROTHMAN. I thank the gentleman from California.

Madam Speaker, my friends, I was asked by the gentlewoman from California if I would share with my colleagues and with you, Madam Speaker, the process by which I came to the conclusion that America should withdraw all of its troops from Iraq without delay.

Like most Americans, Madam Speaker, when the President said to Members of Congress and the entire country that Saddam Hussein intended to bring weapons of mass destruction to the United States to destroy us, to kill thousands of Americans, that got my attention, especially since it was after 9/11.

I am from northeastern New Jersey, and a great number, too many, of my constituents were killed at the World Trade Center. But nonetheless, as an American, after 9/11 I didn't want to wait to get hit again. If the President of the United States and his entire Cabinet were willing to go before me in closed session, before the country in his State of the Union address, before the United Nations with photographs and other testimony that Saddam Hussein was sending Iraqi agents to America with weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical, to be deposited in our water supply system, to bring smallpox to our Nation, et cetera, then maybe we needed to stop Saddam Hussein and stop him immediately.

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Then maybe we needed to stop Saddam Hussein, and stop him immediately.

Again, we were told it was an imminent, immediate threat to the national security of the United States: Saddam, using agents bearing weapons of mass destruction and bringing them on our shores. And so I voted to authorize the President to bring military action against Saddam Hussein.

I think most Americans, Madam Speaker, agreed with me that we didn't want to be caught again off guard, especially if our President told us so unequivocally that these were the facts.

Well, after we deposed Saddam Hussein, removed him from power, Madam Speaker, it became clear to us, most of us and most Americans, and most people in the world, that virtually everything that the President of the United States had told us about Iraq wasn't true. There were no weapons of mass destruction. Saddam had no intention

of bringing Iraqi agents to slaughter Americans on our shore and that Saddam had precious little if not zero contact of any significance with any foreign terrorists or anybody who on their own wanted to do something against America.

And so we realized after we deposed Saddam Hussein that we had been led to go to war in Iraq on false statements. I don't believe they were intentionally false, but they were false. And I believe that history will record thereafter, after we gave the President the authority to go to war in Iraq, he and his administration, Madam Speaker, committed historic military and diplomatic blunders.

But, you know, I felt in my heart that, yes, at that point there were no weapons of mass destruction. The reason for going to war had evaporated. But what had we done? Yes, we did a great thing by removing this evil murderous dictator from Iraq as an oppressor of his people. But then because of the botched way it was handled, those people were living amidst looting and insecurity and murder and terrible hardship, and I felt that we had a moral obligation to help the Iraqi people stabilize their country and perhaps give them a way to become a democracy, to live in freedom.

Even though they were a multi-ethnic society that had never enjoyed that kind of freedom, I felt that was our moral responsibility after we had removed their dictator and created such chaos.

Madam Speaker, after the death of more than 3,000 American servicemen and -women, after the more than 23,000 American men and women wounded in Iraq, after more than 3½ years of our Nation being at war with 150,000 troops a year there, and after spending almost one-half a trillion U.S. taxpayer dollars in Iraq, I believe we have met our moral obligation to the Iraqi people; in particular because we have given them a chance in these 3½ years to decide that they will live together in peace, their own neighbor on neighbor, Sunni, Shia and Kurd.

But the Iraqi people have not yet decided that they want to live in peace. And, frankly, our standing there, being shot at and blown up, has apparently not persuaded them to live with their fellow Iraqis in peace.

And we have needs here in America. Homeland security needs, al Qaeda is in over 60 nations in the world planning and plotting against us, and that is a real threat.

Homeland security needs are unmet. We don't inspect 100 percent of the containers coming into our ports: 5 percent. Cargo going on passenger airplanes is not inspected. I could go on and on. Our borders are not secure.

And our military, our brave and courageous and magnificent military, the best in the world, has been depleted, our Army and Marines in particular. Depleted by this 3½ year engagement in Iraq. They have done heroically, but

some of them are on their second, third and fourth tour of duty in Iraq. It is time to bring our troops home. We should leave 20,000 or 30,000 in the region in Jordan just in case a foreign nation would want to intervene, but that is unlikely and I will explain that in a second.

But bring our troops home and rebuild our military and deal with our own homeland security needs and deal with our domestic needs in education and health care, balance our budget, and get ready to face the threats that are out there in the world that are real because we still live in a dangerous world.

The President says if we do that, there would be a catastrophe in Iraq. Well, Madam Speaker, over 30,000 died in Iraq last year. Thirty thousand. If you do the math, they only have a country of 25 million. We have a country of 300 million. If you do the math, those 33,000 dead Iraqi civilians, that is equivalent to almost 400,000 civilian American deaths last year.

If that was the case in America, 400,000 American civilians killed in a civil war, wouldn't we call that serious?

What is going on in Iraq today is a disaster already. He says al Qaeda will probably take over. Nonsense. Today you have al Qaeda, who are primarily Sunni members of the Islamic faith. You have Sunni Iraqis killing al Qaeda Sunnis. They don't like foreign fighters in Iraq, whether they be American or al Qaeda.

And the Shia in Iraq are no fans of the Sunni al Qaeda, either. But the folks that they don't like the most in their midst are Americans.

The President says we believe in democracy and we went to Iraq to give them a chance for democracy. This is after there were no weapons of mass destruction and all of the other reasons had changed. He says we should be there to give them democracy, notwithstanding the fact that we are bleeding our own Nation dry of human and other resources.

Madam Speaker, what do the Iraqi people wish us to do? The point of democracy is to allow people to express their will on how they wish to be governed. The Iraqi people, 80 percent of them say: Americans, leave our country. Eighty percent of Iraqis say: Americans, leave our country. Sixty percent of Iraqis today say it is all right to kill Americans.

Madam Speaker, when we leave Iraq, and I hope it is within the next six months, caring only about the safety of our troops as we make this strategic withdrawal and rebuild our military and get ready to face others in the region, know that Iran will be very unhappy that we are leaving. Iran will be very unhappy that we are leaving Iraq.

Why? Because then Iran will have to decide if they go fight on behalf of the Shia members of the Iraqi civil war. Maybe Syria will have to come in on behalf of the Sunnis fighting the Shia because Syria is a Sunni nation.

Maybe Saudi Arabia may have to get in. That won't happen.

When we leave, the regional players in the Middle East around Iraq will finally realize this is their problem that they have to solve and can't continue to stand on the sideline causing trouble.

I appreciate all the time the gentlelady has given me, and I appreciate the opportunity to explain how now for just about a year when I announced to my constituents why I believed it was time for us to withdraw our troops from Iraq, that it is indeed time to do so. It is in America's vital national interest that we do so. It is the smart thing to do for our country. We have other needs to address, including rebuilding our military and getting ready for real threats that face us around the world. And the better results will occur in Iraq and the region after we leave. I thank the gentlelady from California.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentleman from New Jersey for all of the time and effort he is putting into helping us get out of Iraq.

Madam Speaker, I yield to Mr. BILL JEFFERSON from Louisiana.

Mr. JEFFERSON. I thank the gentlelady for yielding.

Madam Speaker, this is a very important subject on which we speak tonight. Most of what needs to be said has already been said by Members who have gone before me, and I know the time is short.

However, I want to say a couple of things. I have had the privilege of serving in the military of our country. I was first commissioned as a military intelligence officer and then commissioned in the JAG Corps as a judge advocate general officer. I take it seriously when the Commander in Chief says we need to protect ourselves and defend our country.

I have a district full of veterans. We have a large port facility that is vulnerable to attack and penetration. I had long talks with Colin Powell about these issues, and they were all very persuasive and convincing about what we needed to do to protect ourselves.

I thought back about what we did when President Clinton came to us about Bosnia and Kosovo when he told us that we needed to give him authority to do what we needed to do to protect our country. I thought it was fair to treat both Commanders in Chief the same. We should not play politics over this issue. If we needed to protect our country, we should.

We all know now there were no weapons of mass destruction, no justification for the war, no nuclear weapons could be found there. Nothing that the President told us was true was true. Whether he intended or not, as has been said, the information was untrue; and, therefore, we should not have based the war on it.

The other thing that is important is that most of us who voted on the resolution decided and expected that the

resolution would be followed. Number one, that the President would go to the U.N. and talk to folks and try to get a consensus.

And number two, that he would only go when there was a consensus reached. He really just raced right past the U.N. and went right to war, from the very beginning violating the obligations and trust he asked us to repose in him.

Now we are in the middle of a civil war, and we are asked now to add more troops, add a surge and escalate our efforts there. I don't believe that the American people want to see that done. I surely can't support that at this point down the road.

As we look at what we need to do in our country, there is so much that needs to be done. I happen to represent a district that was inundated by flood waters, not because of a natural disaster only, but because the Corps of Engineers, a U.S. Government agency, failed to protect our people and built levees that were not designed properly, that were not constructed properly and that were not maintained properly. Consequently, they failed and our city drowned.

It is time for our government to face up to domestic responsibilities, particularly for Hurricane Katrina. And all of the money that we are going to spend now on a surge in Iraq, I would like to see a great part of it spent to bring our people home and restore our communities and rebuild back the confidence that people ought to have in us right here in America.

Madam Speaker and Congresswoman WATERS, all of you who have done so much in this area, I thank you for giving me a chance to come here and say these few words tonight. I know our time is very short.

But I want to see our emphasis placed on our domestic responsibility now in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. That is where our country needs to focus.

If it was the Iraq war, after the wheels came off the war machine, that has brought about the change in this body, and if that was a major reason for what has happened here, I believe on the domestic front, Hurricane Katrina was just as important to the changes that we have seen in our Congress now. Therefore, our response must be as intense and as direct on what we do to adjust ourselves in that war as we do to come back here and take care of our people back home.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak tonight. I look forward to our getting together to get this war behind us and bring our troops home. I applaud diplomacy in this area, and I look forward to getting our focus back on our people at home, particularly on our Hurricane Katrina survivors and evacuees.

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Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentleman from Louisiana for that very clear statement.

And now, Madam Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Oakland, California (Ms. LEE), who has given so much leadership on this issue. She has been with us constantly, urging us to get out and coming up with the prescription for how to do it.

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, first, let me thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATERS), the founder of the Out of Iraq Caucus, for her leadership and for this special order tonight, because this is historic.

First of all, let me just say that with regard to the Out of Iraq Caucus, Ms. WATERS knew, and this was early on, that Members of Congress, whether they supported or opposed the war, needed a space in this body, needed a framework to begin to discuss ways to get out of Iraq. She saw early on that Members of Congress knew that they were misled; that the information and intelligence was distorted; and that whether, once again, they believed then and voted for the resolution or not, that they wanted now to have that dialogue and that debate. So she really did open up the space for the debate which we see now occurring, which is extremely important because the debate, quite frankly, especially with regard to this war, has been shut down. So thank you, Ms. WATERS, for your leadership.

Let me also say that tonight we heard from many Members, and I have to thank them for their courage and their very clear statements. They trusted, as they said, the Commander-in-Chief, and the Commander-in-Chief violated their trust. Three thousand of our young men and women now have died and countless Iraqis have died.

The President the other night said that he has made some mistakes, and some of us thought that he was going to talk about how he was going to rectify those mistakes. Instead, he talked about how he was going to continue to escalate this war and continue to dig this country deeper into a hole. He also said, very recently, and his staff, Mr. Snow, said, that if the critics of his policies have a plan on what to do, to come forward with it.

Quite frankly, I believe, and have said this over and over and over again, the President got us into this mess and it is up to him to get us out. But if he wants us to come up with a plan, then we have a plan. We did just that. We introduced, Congresswoman WOOLSEY, WATERS, and myself, H.R. 508, which develops a plan to begin to bring our troops home within 6 months. It also provides for reconstruction of Iraq in terms of our assistance, and it ensures that there will be no permanent military bases in Iraq.

What is going on right now, and we need to call this what it is, is an occupation and it is a civil war. The Iraqi people do not want us there as occupiers. The American people are sick and tired of this war, and we need to bring our troops home.

Let me just remind you that when this authorization to use force was presented to the Congress, Mr. SPRATT, as was said earlier, offered an alternative resolution, and I offered an alternative resolution, which basically said that, look, the United Nations has the responsibility for the inspections process to occur. Let the U.N. process move forward. We received, I believe, about 72 Members, some of which came down and spoke tonight on my resolution. And many Members have told me now that they wish they had voted for that resolution because we would not be in the mess we are in now.

Finally, let me just say once again to Ms. WATERS, thank you for your leadership. I want to thank you for your voice and for making sure that the debate finally is occurring in this Congress, and I urge members of the public and others who believe that what the American people said in November gives us our marching orders to move forward, that they know that we are hearing.

We are going to continue with this debate. Many of us are going to say no to this escalation and no to this \$100 billion supplemental. We want our troops home, we want them protected, and we think the funds should be used to do just that.

Ms. WATERS. I thank the gentlewoman from California for all the work she is doing.

We heard earlier from Members who had voted for the resolution to go to war, who have since changed their minds. Fifteen Members signed up for tonight, but some had to leave. They waited as long as they could. And so we will continue to bring to the floor those Members who have changed their minds.

Tonight not only do we have Ms. LEE, who just joined us, but we have Representative KEITH ELLISON from Minnesota, one of our newer Members who has been consistent on getting out of Iraq. I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. ELLISON. I thank the gentlewoman from California. And I was told early on, Madam Speaker, that the gentlewoman from California wanted to feature Congress people who had voted for the war in Iraq and then had subsequently changed their minds. I was persistent in trying to be a part of tonight's special order, and I thank the gentlewoman from California for allowing me to, because I just wanted to point out that back in 2003 I had no idea that I would ever be standing in the halls of Congress, but I did know in 2003, in March, that this war was wrong and we needed to stand absolutely against it.

But I respect those Members of Congress who came forward tonight and pointed out that this war is wrong, was wrong, and we have to get out of Iraq now.

Today—after 6 long years of subsidies to big oil companies with outrageous profit margins—we made a bold change for America.

Today we gave America an energy policy that will move the Nation towards a day in which no young American will ever again have to fight another oil war for any President—especially this one.

The President finally admitted last Wednesday night what most Americans have known for a long time.

His Iraq policy is a failure.

I rise today to strongly oppose this President's solution to that failure—a surge of American troops.

Surge in Bushspeak is plain and simple—an expansion of the same disastrous policy in Iraq.

The vast majority of our country's top military and foreign policy experts disagree with the viability of the President's approach.

This list includes the current Joint Chiefs of Staff, current military commanders in the region—General Abizaid and Casey, the Baker-Hamilton commission and former Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Republican Senator CHUCK HAGEL told it like it is last week: "I think this speech given last night by this President represents the most dangerous foreign policy blunder in this country since Vietnam." As a Vietnam Veteran he should know.

Our military leaders state we must view Iraq policy as a three-legged stool.

Each leg of the stool represents a key strategy to support reconstruction of Iraq—one leg represents our military strategy, one economic and one political.

All 3 legs have to be present, and strong, to ensure Iraqi success. If one strategy is over-emphasized—and others don't even exist—the stool and our strategy falls apart.

The President's plan is—at best—a one-legged stool—our military involvement. A one-legged stool cannot stand.

Nor should it—when it is built on the lives of 22,000 young Americans.

I am not a military expert, but experts of counterinsurgencies look at Iraq and recommend a military force of a quarter million, to a half million troops for any hope of success.

[Let me be clear I am not for any increase in our troop levels in Iraq]

But, 22,000 troops don't even come close to making this critical military benchmark.

Ted Carpenter of the Cato Institute stated last week:

... A lesser deployment would have no realistic chance to get the job done. A limited surge of additional troops is the latest illusory panacea offered by the people who brought us the Iraq quagmire in the first place. It is an idea that should be rejected.

This is a reckless and irresponsible proposal. To allow the President to place these selfless young Americans in a virtual shooting gallery is wrong.

Since last night, 3,012 of America's most promising young men and women have lost their lives in Iraq—and over 22,000 more have been grievously wounded.

We have squandered more than \$350 billion of our Treasury in Iraq with no end in sight.

Three hundred fifty billion dollars would fund 48 million kids a year of Head Start; it could provide 17 million students 4 year scholarships at public universities; we could build 3 million additional housing units; or we could hire 6 million more public school teachers for one year.

Instead, we've dug 3,012 graves and mortgaged our children's future. Enough is enough.

Monday, we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King's life and work. In one of Dr. King's last speeches in which he criticized our Vietnam policy, Dr. King stated that: "a time comes when silence is betrayal."

That time has come—and our continued silence will be our Nation's betrayal. The immediate withdrawal of our troops is the only new way out of Iraq:

Lt. Gen. William Odom, of the Hudson Institute said, (and I quote): "The wisdom and moral courage to change the course for strategic purposes is what we need today, not mindless rhetoric 'about staying the course.' 'Cutting and running' from Iraq is neither cowardly nor imprudent. It is the only way to recover from what is turning out to be the greatest strategic mistake in American history."

I concur wholeheartedly.

I thank the gentlewoman from California for her courage and persistence in the pursuit of peace; the pursuit of a saner and safer world for our children, and all the children of the world.

ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of today, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CONAWAY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CONAWAY. Madam Speaker, it is great to be here tonight.

Wow. I came here planning to talk about H.R. 6, which was passed this afternoon, but not knowing how much time our colleagues across the aisle were going to take, I was instructed to get here quite early in order that if they quit ahead of time that we might lose our hour. So I have sat here for the last, almost 45 minutes, and listened to my colleagues.

It must be great, it must be wonderful to be so smugly self-confident to know the answers unequivocally. Things going on in Iraq are anything but clear-cut. We have some tough things going on ahead of us. I think there is a phrase that describes what really bothers me the most, and that is the classic, if I had known then what I know now, I might have taken a different course. Well, who wouldn't say that?

It is just amazing to watch folks flee to the sidelines of this fight and say it is all yours, Mr. President, this is all your deal; and we are smugly confident to know that you are doing it the wrong way and our plan is to flee Iraq immediately. And all of the evidence to the contrary, that Iraq would become a disaster of biblical proportions, they simply ignore with a cavalier attitude that just amazes me.

They continue to ignore the fact that since 9/11 we have not had a terrorist attack on this country, and I think that comes from several factors. One, we have some really wonderful men and women standing between us and the bad guys. Whether it is in uniform, whether in the intelligence services, or whether it is in the black operations all around this world, there are great men and women putting their lives on