Mr. Speaker, it is time for the stubbornness of the

White House to end. Today the President received recommendations from

the bipartisan Iraq Study Group. This report should serve as a wake-up

call that the status quo is simply not working, and that both Democrats

and Republicans are now coming to the conclusion that we must take our

troops out of Iraq.

The President's strategy of stay the course is not working. In fact,

things in Iraq are dramatically worse today than they were 1 year ago.

Consider that last year the people of Iraq were experiencing an average

of 200 attacks per week. Today those attacks have doubled to more than

400 every week.

Imagine that, Mr. Speaker, living in a country or trying to stabilize

a country where 400 attacks are taking place on a weekly basis. The

situation is not getting any easier for American troops either. This

October was the deadliest month for U.S. troops in more than 2 years,

and the war is increasingly a war fought exclusively by American

troops. To date 12 countries have pulled their troops out, and six more

countries are planning to withdraw in the coming months.

Now, what are our brave men and women accomplishing today in Iraq?

They are essentially serving as referees in a civil war between Shia

and Sunni militias.

Mr. Speaker, we are also spending billions of dollars in Iraq, money

that could be better served on domestic priorities here in the United

States or in combating terrorists who are making a comeback in

Afghanistan.

Today we are spending $8 billion a month in Iraq, and we are not

seeing any change on the ground.

Mr. Speaker, the American people voiced their frustration with the

problems in Iraq and demanded with their votes a change of course on

election day this year. But instead of listening to the people, instead

of listening to Democrats, instead of listening to countless foreign

policy experts who have demanded a change of course, President Bush has

stubbornly stayed the same course.

He said there will be no graceful exit from Iraq, and that American

troops will still be in Iraq when he leaves office in 2 years. This is

President Bush's war. He initiated it, and it is now his responsibility

to get us out.

Mr. Speaker, we must eliminate the open-ended commitment to keep

troops in Iraq indefinitely. The Iraqi Prime Minister stated that his

army has reached, and I quote, a good level of competency and

efficiency, and that they could be ready to take on the task of

securing Iraq by June of next year. We should force the Iraqi security

forces to play an increased role in securing their own country. The

Pentagon must also redouble its efforts to effectively train the Iraqi

security forces.

This past weekend, Mr. Speaker, a classified memo penned by Secretary

of Defense Donald Rumsfeld suggested that our course of action in Iraq

is not working and the President should reconsider redeploying troops.

Now, as Democrats, for months we have proposed this solution of

redeploying troops out of Iraq, and the only thing that has happened is

that we have been vilified by the President and many of our Republican

colleagues in Congress.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I support House Joint Resolution 73

introduced by Congressman Jack Murtha of Pennsylvania last November 17

in 2005.

I don't want to go through that whole resolution, but I would like to

make reference to the last whereas clause and the resolve clause, and

it says, Whereas Congress finds it evident that continuing U.S.

military action in Iraq is not in the best interests of the United

States of America, the people of Iraq or the Persian Gulf region. Now,

therefore be it resolved that the deployment of the United States

forces in Iraq, by direction of Congress, is hereby terminated and the

forces involved are to be redeployed at the earliest practicable date.

That is what I believe in. That is what I would like to see us pass

here.

Today I think, Mr. Speaker, it is very important to mention and to

note that the Iraq Study Group, a bipartisan group, Democrats and

Republicans, sent President Bush a strong message, and that is that the

President's state of denial about the Iraq war cannot continue. The

time has simply come to bring our troops home.

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