

today. I just heard my colleague from across the aisle talk about a new plan. Of course, I guess that fits in with the smoke-and-mirror 110th Congress about a new plan. Well, if you don't want to increase the troop size, which the undemocratic majority evidently does not want to do with this resolution, and you don't want to stop the funding, then what do you want to do? You want to stay the course. I think the American people said in the election, we don't want to stay the course.

I think that our military leaders, we hear this resolution when the other side talks about it, they talk about supporting our troops. And I am sure General Petraeus is confused to get approved unanimously in the Senate and hear this resolution about supporting our troops and yet we don't want to follow what he has said we need to do. General Casey agrees with this and he has been confirmed to a new position. And so how can we tell our men and women in the field that, Hey, look, we support you, but don't listen to what your commanders have to say. We've got something different. We're going to micromanage the war from Washington.

A lot of the people that are going to be voting on this resolution have never been to Iraq. They have never been to Afghanistan. They have never seen some of the situations that our young men and women are put in for freedom-loving people all over this world. I don't know how they could actually vote on it if they have never been, but I guess they will. Because they are trying to paint a picture of having your cake and eating it, too. We support our troops but, look, we don't want to change our way of what we're doing. We don't want to try to help you with more troops, to try to help you save your life over there and securing these areas that you risked your life in going in to take, knock the enemy out, and then have to leave and let the enemy come back in and be even stronger. What kind of message does that send?

This is not about President Bush, because I think President Bush has tried every way, Mr. Speaker, he knows how to make this a successful campaign in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he continues to come up with new ideas through the help and the advice of his military commanders to win this war on terror. This is a global war on terror. Some people from the other side seem to believe that if we pull out of Iraq that the Iraqi people are going to go back to tending sheep and herding goats. That is not what is going to happen. If we pull out of Iraq, what is going to happen is you are going to see more bloodshed than we have seen in a long time in this world, and it is going to be the innocent Iraqi people who stuck their finger in that purple ink and went and voted for the first time in their life that are going to be the ones to suffer, the ones that said, we believe in freedom, we believe in governing ourselves, we support the coalition forces here be-

cause we believe that they're coming to free us from this tyrant that we have been under. Those are the ones that are going to die. Those are the ones that are going to suffer the most. Those are the Iraqis that are losing their lives today because they want freedom.

Our men and women in uniform, those blessed souls that are in Iraq and Afghanistan and are losing their lives, they volunteered to put their lives in harm's way not only to protect our freedom in this country, not only to protect this Republic that we have but to spread freedom and democracy all across the world to every human being that loves freedom and liberty. These brave men and women need our support. They need our encouragement. But what they don't need is a smoke-and-mirror resolution that is done for political reasons and because of political promises made on a campaign trail. They don't need that. They need real encouragement and support from this Congress. Let's do something to give them that and not do things that strengthens the enemy, discourages our troops and really and truly, I believe, goes against the Constitution. When we all took the oath of office, we made an oath to the Constitution, not to anybody else. Let's uphold that. Let's respect our Commander in Chief and the generals in the field.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

It is interesting listening to the Republican fog machine starting to churn out its smoke surrounding the resolution that we are going to be discussing this week. I listened to my friends from Texas and from Georgia talking about the innocent people that are going to suffer under the approaches that we are talking about. Well, it is interesting that polls show that the people in Iraq, the majority of them, think it's all right for the insurgents to shoot and kill our soldiers. They are not just fighting us. They are also fighting each other. The discussion this week is going to be the first honest and direct opportunity to start redirecting the course here.

Stay the course? My Lord, that is not remotely what we are talking about here. Anybody who has watched what the Democrats have done for the first month that they have been in power realize that we are setting in motion a foundation to do what should have been done from the outset: to regain the power of the purse, to be able to deal with oversight which has been completely abandoned by my Republican friends over the last 5 years, and start developing the policy framework that is going to be necessary to deal

with the disaster that has been created in Iraq. The increase in troops, the over 20,000 that we will be talking about this week, was not the first choice of the military and indeed the masterminds that President Bush turned to for this surge theory did not talk about 20,000 or 25,000. They wanted far more troops. They have stripped this down.

I heard my friend from Texas disparage the retired generals and admirals who have come forward to deal with their deep concern about the flawed strategy and implementation of the Iraq campaign. These are men and women who have proven their dedication to this country, who in many cases have been in far more battles than all the people in Congress combined, who don't have anything to win or lose by not speaking their mind. If you go back and check the record with what they have said, with what has happened in Iraq, I'll take those retired commanders every time. The fact is they've been right, and if the President and Congress had listened to them, we wouldn't be in the middle of the mess that we're in now.

I served in this body when President Clinton took steps to stop the genocide in the Balkans, and I watched the Republicans on the other side of the aisle be unable to figure out whether they supported the President, they were opposed to the President, or they wanted to change the policy. Go back and look at the former majority leader, Tom DeLay, who just couldn't figure out what to do in the Balkans but he sure knew that he wasn't going to support the Commander in Chief.

What the Democrats are doing now is laying a foundation that should have been done from the outset. We have had over 50 oversight hearings now, in the first month, more meaningful oversight than in the last 5 years of the Republicans who just couldn't bring people in to find out what happened to the billions of dollars in cash that is now unaccounted for. In committee after committee, the American people are finally getting to what should have happened years ago in terms of meaningful oversight. This is what the Truman Commission did during World War II. The Republicans would have no part of it, and now the American people are seeing for themselves. We will soon see in the appropriations process that Congress is regaining the power of the purse to make sure that the money will be spent properly.

There is no reason to not have troops that are deployed with a guarantee that they will have the equipment that they need. It was a travesty what men and women from my State were subjected to, being sent over to Iraq in a war of choice without being properly equipped. Under the Democratic watch, we are going to make sure that that is not going to happen.

Last but not least, by having a simple debate on whether or not this Congress approves of this escalation, we

are going to establish a baseline. I suggest that this baseline is not only going to have overwhelming Democratic support, but we are going to find dozens of Republicans on the other side of the aisle who, when finally given a choice, are going to make a clear stand with us. It's just the beginning, it's long overdue, and it's exactly what the American people, what our troops and the Iraqi people deserve.

ON THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET AND DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. BUTTERFIELD) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in just a few minutes, we will begin to debate House Concurrent Resolution 63. The American people are ready for this debate, and finally the time has now come, and we will decide and recommend whether or not the President should escalate our troop strength in Iraq. I look forward to this debate.

But this morning, Mr. Speaker, I want to use my time to talk about the fiscal crisis that we have in America. You know, Mr. Speaker, in my speeches to constituents throughout the First District of North Carolina, I always make a point to talk about the fiscal crisis that we are facing in this country, the fiscal crisis that the Republicans have created over the last 5 years. You know, Mr. Speaker, when I tell them that we have unprecedented deficits that have resulted in \$8.6 trillion in debt, and when I tell them that we spend \$2 billion a week in Iraq, \$8 billion per month, and yes, \$100 billion per year, but only spend \$90 billion in funding education in this country, they are absolutely shocked.

And now, Mr. Speaker, the President's 2008 budget will raise our debt by more than \$1 trillion over the next 5 years. This proposed budget that we received last week from President Bush would make tax cuts for the wealthy permanent while cutting vital programs that are important to middle-class families.

To help pay for the nearly \$2 trillion in tax cuts over the next 10 years, the budget substantially cuts Medicare and Medicaid, creating uncertainty for millions of seniors and low-income families who get their health insurance through these programs. The President's budget also shortchanges veterans' programs, cutting veterans' health care by \$3.5 billion over 5 years and providing less than veterans service organizations say is needed to meet the growing needs of our veterans, including those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, congressional Democrats have repeatedly, repeatedly expressed the desire to work construc-

tively with the administration to restore fiscal responsibility to the Federal budget consistent with our Nation's priorities. However, this budget that we received last week is marked by a disappointing dedication to the failed policies of the past rather than a commitment to a new course. Fortunately for the American people, Democrats will now produce an alternative that will be fiscally responsible and meet the demands of our great Nation.

IRAQ WAR RESOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2007, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) for 5 minutes is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, you like I am a freshman in this body and today we will begin the debate on one of the most important topics that this Congress has debated and that is America's involvement in the Middle East and Iraq and eventually in Afghanistan in dealing with the whole terrorist situation.

I have been in this House, Mr. Speaker, and listened to the Republicans and listened to the Democrats and the Democrats, of which I am a member, have talked about protecting the troops and opposing the President's surge, which is really an escalation, and the Republicans have come in here today and said that we need to in essence stay the course, we need to put in more troops and we're doing wrong by opposing the President's escalation or surge.

Mr. Speaker, from what I have heard from the American people, the American people realize this war has been a failure, that American men and women are dying, and dying for what purpose? For the purpose theoretically of trying to bring democracy to Iraq where the people in Iraq don't even want us to be there, where the Iraqi government is almost nonexistent, where calling what is going on in Iraq a civil war is almost a misnomer, for a civil war connotes a nation and there really is not a nation in Iraq. The ministries are not working. The government is not working. Many of the people in Iraq of the highest caliber have left Iraq and gotten out of what is a zone where there have been tens of thousands of Iraqis die. What the people across the aisle talk about in bringing democracy to these people, in bringing democracy to these people we have killed tens of thousands of Iraqis, we have destroyed their nation, and we have put casualties among tens of thousands of Iraqis. What a price to pay to bring democracy to a country, to destroy the country.

Mr. SKELTON, who will bring forth the Democratic response, has said that this, quote-unquote, surge is 100,000 troops too few and 3 years too late. I don't have anybody in this House I respect more on this position than the

head of the Armed Forces Committee, Mr. SKELTON from Missouri.

The fact is this war was started under false pretenses and much of that information has come out lately. Many of the people who voted to give the President the power to go into Iraq did so under facts, or appearance of facts that were given the American people and this Congress that were false. I remember being at home and watching on television when the President addressed this Congress and talked about Osama bin Laden and talked about what he said were connections between Iraq and 9/11 and it made everybody feel like if you were a red-blooded American, you wanted to do something about Iraq because they had destroyed the Twin Towers, they had killed 2,000 people, Americans and others, and put a devastation in this world that we hadn't seen except in movies.

Well, that information given us was false. There wasn't a connection between Iraq and 9/11. We went to war for reasons that are still not quite clear and known, and this United States of America went to war against a country that was not at war with us and we were an aggressor nation. This is something we shouldn't have done. It is not about cut and run, as the people on the Republican side say, but it is, as President Clinton says often, it is about stop and think. And when you stop and think, do you support the troops by continuing to send them in harm's way?

Mr. Speaker, I am a prizefight fan and one of my favorite fighters was Floyd Patterson. At one time Floyd Patterson fought Muhammad Ali and Muhammad Ali was just whooping him and whooping him and whooping him. And his trainers kept putting him back in the ring and Floyd kept going in there and trying to fight. But Floyd Patterson didn't belong in the ring with Muhammad Ali. He could beat a lot of fighters, but he couldn't beat Muhammad Ali. He was in the wrong fight at the wrong time and he just got beat and beat and beat. And what a good trainer would do is throw in the towel, and say, We quit. It's a technical knockout. We'll fight another day. We'll figure out a new way to fight Muhammad Ali maybe or maybe that's just somebody we can't fight. It just wasn't our fight.

To support our troops isn't to continue to send more troops into Iraq and have more American men and women die and more American men and women come back as casualties and be in veterans hospitals but is to get them out of a war they can't win and out of a situation where all they are is fodder for a civil war, where Iraqis are killing Iraqis and Iraqis are killing Americans and whether the Americans are there or not, the Iraqis are going to have their civil war and there is going to be bloodshed. The only issue left, Mr. Speaker, is how much American blood will be spilled on this foreign soil on a foreign policy folly that is somewhat