

The Smell of Impeachment Keeps Getting Stronger

by Nancy Spannaus

The House of Representatives' four-day debate on President Bush's war in Iraq, which concluded with a decisive 246 to 182 vote of disapproval for the "surge" escalation now under way, marks the beginning of the reassertion of the Congress's Constitutional authority. If the American people utilize this occasion to escalate their own pressure on the Congress to act according to the truth, this process will surely end in the early impeachment of Vice President Dick Cheney, and then of the President as well.

Nothing like the Feb. 13-16 debate has been seen in Washington since at least 1970, when the Congress voted to overturn the Gulf of Tonkin resolution that was used to justify the Vietnam War. The resolution, which had been co-sponsored by Republican Walter Jones (N.C.) and the Democratic leadership, was comprised of two parts, one of which expressed support for the U.S. troops, and the other, which disapproved of Bush's plan to send 21,500 additional troops to Iraq. While the resolution's opponents made a big deal out of the fact that it was "non-binding," the reality is that the vote puts the President on notice that he does not have support for his escalation, and that more actions will certainly follow.

The fact that political reality is closing in on the Cheney-Bush war party was underscored in the extraordinary Saturday vote called in the Senate Feb. 17, the day after the House vote. Whereas only two of the Senate Republicans had broken from the leadership to support a vote on the anti-surge resolution the previous week, this time, seven Republicans voted with the Democrats to proceed with a vote on a Senate version of the House Resolution. Because it takes 60 votes to cut off debate, and move to a vote, however, the Republican leadership was still able to block action in the Senate.

The continuing stalemate in Congress underscores the need for an even greater mobilization throughout the population, which is way ahead of their Representatives in opposing not only the surge, but the war. This mood is reflected in an

intense mobilization by veterans' organizations, and by the introduction of resolutions against the war in at least 22 state legislatures. Resolutions have passed in at least one house of the legislatures in Vermont, Iowa, and California. When Members of Congress return to their districts for the Presidents' Day recess, they can expect to get an earful, including from the Democratic grassroots being organized by the LaRouche Youth Movement.

The Debate

More than 390 of the 434 members of the House of Representatives participated in the historic debate on the question of war and peace. Seldom in recent decades has there been such serious concentration on a crucial issue of state in the nation's capital.

The quality of the speeches given varied widely, of course. The Republican leadership had adopted a policy of attack which seemed to be taken directly from the Cheney playbook. It called for Republicans to accuse the resolution's proponents of "giving in" to the onslaught of "Islamic terror" which is allegedly threatening to destroy Western civilization. Some Republicans went back as far as the days of the Barbary Pirates, others to the Khomeini Revolution of 1979, others even further back, in order to claim that the enemy the United States is fighting in Iraq is out to spread an "Islamic caliphate" throughout the world. Such rhetoric was geared to build up the Islamic enemy-image in anticipation of Cheney's war against Iran, as well as to inflame the debate.

A significant portion of the Republican Party broke from this jingoism, however. Twelve leading Republicans, of the 17 who ultimately voted with the Democrats, rose to speak to the body on Feb. 14, with passionate appeals for listening to the wise military leaders, and abandoning the disastrous course which the President has chosen. The leader of this grouping was Rep. Walter Jones of North Carolina, who



EIRNS/Elizabeth Mendel

The decisive vote in the House of Representatives Feb. 16 against the escalation of the Iraq War can quickly lead to the long overdue impeachment of Vice President Dick Cheney. Here, members of the LaRouche Youth Movement organize in Oakland, California Feb. 5 to speed that process.

comes from an area full of military families, and who has been outspoken against the war for more than a year.

One leitmotif of the arguments made by those supporting the resolution was the value of the Baker-Hamilton Commission's recommendations, which have been virtually thrown in the trash by the President and Vice President. We need a "surge in diplomacy," as one Representative put it; we need to talk with Syria and Iran. Another major theme was the Constitutional responsibility of the Congress for war-making in this democratic republic. It was noted repeatedly that this was the first full debate on the war in the nearly four years it has been in process, and that it is Congress which has the Constitutional responsibility over the conduct of the war.

The Next Steps

Many Congressmen made the point in their remarks that this resolution is only the first step in the process, especially if the President refuses to heed their views. That he will proceed with his disastrous plan, the President has already made clear, so moves are already being taken for further action.

Drawing the most attention is the plan by Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.), who held an Internet press conference on Feb. 15 to lay out his strategy. Murtha, head of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said that he was "working

with his committee to draft a resolution that would restrict troop redeployment and some of the elements would include not sending troops to Iraq that have had less than one year at home, and troops could only be sent to Iraq after they were shown to have all the needed training and equipment, and the Army and Marines could not extend people anymore, and the resolution would stop the stop-loss policy."

Murtha said that "the resolution could contain language stating that President Bush would have to get Congressional approval before going ahead with an attack on Iran. He also said that the resolution would be brought before his committee "on March 14 and then sent to the House floor for a vote." Murtha said, "the resolution would limit the number of troops available for deployment without cutting off funding."

Because Murtha is so closely identified with the military, and began his drive against the war in November 2005, he has been the target of much of the pro-war lobby.

To Stop War on Iran?

While Congress moves slowly toward opposing the President's suicidal strategy, as Democratic Majority Leader Sen. Harry Reid (Nev.) has pointed out, the Administration is moving rapidly on its escalation. There is little

question that the immediate target is an expansion of the war to Iran.

On this front, much too little was said in the House debate, although there are bills in the works to insist that the President take no action against Iran without coming to the Congress for explicit authorization. In the Senate as well, numerous Senators have insisted that the President admit he has no authority to attack Iran, on the basis of the September 2002 Use of Force resolution, which authorized the U.S. attack on Iraq. The Administration has refused to answer explicit queries, and at this point, Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.) is openly considering revoking the Use of Force resolution.

Of crucial help in this process will be the intervention of local Democratic and other constituency groups, who demand impeachment of Cheney immediately, *before* any outrageous provocations against Iran are taken. Exemplary, was the passage of a resolution by the leadership of one of the largest Democratic Party organizations in the United States, the Los Angeles Democratic Central Committee, calling for the state party as a whole to move aggressively to support bipartisan efforts for the impeachment of Cheney. The resolution was submitted by the LaRouche Youth Movement, and states that "the Democratic Party of the State of California lend its support for bipartisan efforts to remove the Vice President from

office as quickly as possible.”

The environment for Cheney’s removal is likely to be greatly improved this coming week, as the trial of his former chief of staff Lewis Libby comes to a conclusion. The trial has featured nothing, if not Cheney’s systemic attempt to cover up his lies about pre-war Iraq intelligence, which are in fact impeachable crimes.

Documentation

Below are excerpts from the House debate on the Iraq War resolution (House Concurrent Resolution 63) on Feb. 14, 2007, as reported in the Congressional Record.

Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.)

I want to start my comments by sharing with the House that I met with a real marine general hero that very few people on the floor know his name; his name is General Gregory Newbold. And I want to quote him from *Time* magazine, April 9, 2006, “Why Iraq Was a Mistake.” I will be brief.

Two senior military officers are known to have challenged Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on the planning of the Iraq War. Army General Eric Shinseki publicly dissented, and found himself marginalized. Marine Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, the Pentagon’s top operations officer, voiced his objections internally and then retired, in part out of opposition to the war. Here, for the first time, General Newbold goes public with a full-throated critique. I want to quote this to the House from General Newbold.

“I was a witness and therefore a party to the action that led us to the invasion of Iraq, an unnecessary war. Inside the military family, I made no secret of my view that these zealots’ rationale for war made no sense, and I think I was outspoken enough to make those senior to me uncomfortable. But I now regret that I did not more openly challenge those who were determined to invade a country whose actions were peripheral to the real threat, al-Qaeda.”

I mention that, Mr. Speaker, because today this is an important debate. And, yes, my friends on the other side I respect and have great love and affection for. But I remember in 1999, when we were on the floor as the majority party criticizing President Clinton for going into Bosnia, that was a nonbinding resolution.

That is what the Congress is about: debate, disagreements, agreement, debate. That is our constitutional responsibility. . . .



Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-Md.)

. . . Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote for this resolution for many reasons that I will explain, but this resolution is not a retreat from Iraq. This resolution is understanding the new phase that we find ourselves in with the war in Iraq and the war on terrorism. So it is a step forward in the right direction.

I want to begin by commending our American troops and the intelligence community for their bravery, their professionalism, and their stunning competence in Iraq and Afghanistan under very difficult circumstances. Those young men and women have eliminated terrorist training camps and gotten rid of Saddam Hussein and his band of terrorists, who for years have brutalized the Iraqi people and many people, many thousands of people in the region.

They have eliminated the potential for weapons of mass destruction, these young men and women, and we are proud of that. The Taliban is disbanded and al-Qaeda is on the run. These are our troops and the intelligence community.

Where are we now? We find ourselves now, the war on Iraq, and the global war on terrorism, in a new phase; the President understands that phase. The Congress is grasping with that phase. We now know the war in Iraq is in a new phase, and a global war on terror continues, so how do we respond?

How do we approach this new phase? Let’s look at the recent past. Let’s go back to the 1950s. President Eisenhower said, for the United States to be safe and secure we need a strong military, the best intelligence, and consensus and dialogue.

President Eisenhower implemented all of those practices, especially after Nikita Khrushchev pounded his shoe at the podium of the United Nations and pointed to the Western diplomats and said, “we will bury you.”

Eisenhower’s response? He invited Khrushchev to the United States for a dialogue.

President Kennedy was told there were armed nuclear warheads in Cuba. What did President Kennedy do? Proceed with dialogue and talking with the Soviets. We did not go to war. Nixon went to China.

Who during that period of time did we not have a dialogue with? It was Ho Chi Minh; 53,000 Americans died in the Ten Thousand Day War. Hundreds of thousands were wounded, and millions of Vietnamese were killed. What if we had a dialogue with Ho Chi Minh about ending the French colonial period and encouraging Vietnam to have self-determination, that which we fought for in World War II? What would have happened?

Fifty-three years of dialogue with North Korea just now may be yielding results, 53 years of dialogue. Ask yourself this question. Is a century of dialogue without resolution better than one day on the battlefield? Don’t be quick to answer that, but ask that question to yourself.

The world, rich and poor, the people of the world, are intimately familiar with American history, especially with the

following man. They know the words of Thomas Jefferson. "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

They know Lincoln's words, "with malice toward none and charity for all." They know Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, words, "You should be judged by the content of your character."

America is the race of races. The melting pot has become a common heritage with the world's people. Our enemies are ignorance, arrogance, and dogma. Monstrous certainty has been and is the tragedy of mankind. The new phase of the war in Iraq and the global war on terror not only includes the military, it not only includes the intelligence community, but in this instance it must include a surge of diplomacy, to integrate the Middle Eastern countries in a diplomatic dialogue about the stability of the region, including reconciliation, economics, trade issues, medical and educational exchanges, etc., etc. This must be and is a necessary part of that complete strategy to make America safe and secure. The blueprint, the starting point, is to vote "yes" today on today's resolution.

The second phase of that is to understand the words which are the blueprint for this new phase, the Iraq Study Group. What do we do with U.S. troops in the Middle East? There are strong recommendations for that. What do we do about training and equipping the Iraqi Army and making them prepared? That is in the Iraq Study Group.

What is the framework for cooperation with the Iraq people, the Iraq Government, and the problems with sectarian violence? That is in the Iraq Study Group.

What about a new diplomatic initiative with all of Iraq's neighbors, including Iran and Syria? How about consultation with Congress? Vote for this resolution, and we can move on to end the violence, the sectarian chaos, the foolish, bitter electronic exchanges between countries, electronic exchanges, instead of face-to-face conversations. That effort, fully implemented, will bring our troops home sooner. They will have a brighter future, and the generations to come for the people in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We as Members of Congress are at the controls. We are able to control the policy. How? With our vote. Do we know how to use the military? Do we know how to use the intelligence community? Do we know the possibilities of consensus and dialogue with all the countries of the region? If our young men and women are brave enough to go into Iraq and Afghanistan, then we as Members of Congress must be brave enough and informed to start a dialogue in Damascus, in Tehran, in the entire region, to hasten peace.

The first step is an "aye" vote on this resolution.

Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.)

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank Chairman Skelton and Chairman Lantos for allowing me to be part of this resolu-

tion, H. Con. Res. 63.

Also I want to thank the 10 Republicans who came to the floor to join me today to support this resolution. In closing, I want to again say this resolution is simple and to the point. The most important point is to say, thank you, men and women in uniform; you are great, you are magnificent, we are behind you 100%.

The second part deals with the surge. . . . I quoted five generals that have said in the last six months this surge will not work, it is not the right policy answer. . . .

Mr. Speaker, as I close, and this is my close, let's pass this resolution. Let's work with the President to find an end point to the strategy, and let's not put our men and women in the middle of a civil war to make them referees.

God bless America, and God bless our men and women in uniform. Please, God, continue to bless this country.

Rep. Ron Paul (R-Tex.)

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in support of the resolution and in opposition to the escalation in Iraq. . . .

Mr. Speaker, this grand debate is welcomed, but it could be that this is nothing more than a distraction from the dangerous military confrontation approaching with Iran, which is supported by many in leadership on both sides of the aisle. This resolution, unfortunately, does not address the disaster in Iraq. Instead, it appears to oppose the war while at the same time offering no change of the status quo in Iraq.

As such, it is not actually a vote against a troop surge. A real vote against a troop surge is a vote against the coming supplemental appropriation which finances it. I hope all my colleagues who vote against this surge today will vote against the budgetary surge when it really counts, when we vote on the supplemental.

The biggest red herring in this debate is the constant innuendo that those who don't support expanding the war are somehow opposing the troops. It is nothing more than a canard to claim that those of us who struggled to prevent the bloodshed and now want it stopped are somehow less patriotic and less concerned about the welfare of our military personnel.

Osama bin Laden has expressed sadistic pleasure with the invasion in Iraq, and was surprised that we served his interests above and beyond his dreams on how we responded after the 9/11 attacks. His pleasure comes from our policy of folly, getting ourselves bogged down in the middle of a religious civil war 7,000 miles from home that is financially bleeding us to death. Total costs now are recently estimated to exceed \$2 trillion. His recruitment of Islamic extremists has been greatly enhanced by our occupation of Iraq.

Unfortunately, we continue to concentrate on the obvious mismanagement of a war promoted by false information, and ignore debating the real issue which is this: Why are we determined to follow a foreign policy of empire building and pre-emption which is unbecoming of a constitutional republic?

Those on the right should recall that the traditional conservative position of nonintervention was their position for most of the 20th Century, and they benefited politically from the wars carelessly entered into by the left. Seven years ago, the right benefited politically by condemning the illegal intervention in Kosovo and Somalia. At the time, the right was outraged over the failed policy of nation building.

It is important to recall that the left in 2003 offered little opposition to the preemptive war in Iraq, and many are now not willing to stop it by defunding it, or work to prevent an attack on Iran.

The catch-all phrase, the “war on terrorism” in all honesty has no more meaning than if one wants to wage a war against criminal gangsterism. Terrorism is a tactic. You can’t have a war against a tactic. It is deliberately vague and nondefinable in order to justify and permit perpetual war anywhere and under any circumstances. Don’t forget, the Iraqis and Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with any terrorist attack against us, including that on 9/11.

Special interests and the demented philosophy of conquests have driven most wars throughout all of history. Rarely has the cause of liberty, as it was in our own Revolution, been the driving force. In recent decades, our policies have been driven by neo-conservative empire radicalism, profiteering in the military-industrial complex, misplaced do-good internationalism, mercantilistic notions regarding the need to control natural resources, and blind loyalty to various governments in the Middle East.

For all the misinformation given the American people to justify our invasion, such as our need for national security, enforcing U.N. resolutions, removing a dictator, establishing a democracy, protecting our oil, the argument has been reduced to this: If we leave now, Iraq will be left in a mess; implying the implausible, that if we stay, it won’t be a mess.

Since it could go badly when we leave, that blame must be placed on those who took us there, not on those of us who now insist that Americans no longer need be killed or maimed, and that Americans no longer need to kill any more Iraqis. We have had enough of both.

Resorting to a medical analogy: A wrong diagnosis was made at the beginning of the war, and the wrong treatment was prescribed. Refusing to reassess our mistakes and insisting on just more and more of a failed remedy is destined to kill the patient. In this case, the casualties will be our liberties and prosperity, here at home, and peace abroad.

There is no logical reason to reject the restraints placed in the Constitution regarding our engaging in foreign conflicts unrelated to our national security. The advice of the founders and our early Presidents was sound then, and it is sound today.

We shouldn’t wait until our financial system is completely ruined and we are forced to change our ways. We should do it as quickly as possible and stop the carnage and the financial bleeding that will bring us to our knees and eventually force us to stop that which we should have never started.

We all know in time the war will be defunded one way or another and the troops will come home. So why not now?

Rep. Joseph Courtney (D-Conn.)

Mr. Speaker, today we are here, exactly 100 days after a historic watershed election in this country, in which the American people spoke loudly and clearly that they wanted a new Congress to rise to its constitutional duty and hold this Administration accountable for its war policy in Iraq. The day I was sworn in as a new Member of Congress, I accepted this responsibility, and I rise today in opposition to the President’s escalation of the war and in support of H. Con. Res. 63.

Make no mistake about the significance of what is happening this week. America’s new Congress will go on record for the first time in opposition to the Bush Administration’s four-year legacy of mistakes and misjudgments in Iraq. This will be in sharp contrast to eight months ago when the prior Congress did exactly the opposite. That Congress lined up in lockstep with a war resolution written by and for the White House.

That resolution completely brushed over the misleading and manipulated intelligence that got us into this conflict, the strain of this war on our brave men and women in uniform, and the drain on our Nation’s military readiness that is undercutting critical efforts in Afghanistan and our overall defense infrastructure. Instead of doing their constitutional duty, the 109th Congress instead just rubber-stamped the Administration’s rhetoric and failing policy.

Opponents of today’s resolution are claiming that it will damage our troop’s morale. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I believe the opposite is true.

Let us be very clear about where the 20,000 new troops will come from. President Bush cannot simply dial 911 and 20,000 fresh new troops appear. This escalation can only happen by extending the deployments of soldiers already in Iraq, beyond their promised commitments, or accelerating the arrival of preexisting rotations. Upon close examination, it is clear that the impact of this surge lands squarely on the backs of our men and women in uniform who have already borne an unfair burden.

As we debate this resolution, there are nearly 1,900 men and women from my State of Connecticut, including 962 from Connecticut’s National Guard, serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. They have all honored our Nation with their service and sacrifice, and they have done all that has been asked of them and more, and their families have shown awe-inspiring strength in their absence.

Earlier this month, I was forwarded an e-mail from a constituent serving in Iraq which demonstrates the consequences of these unsustainable policies. In it he described how the morale in his unit fell when they found out that their tour was being unexpectedly extended another four months. . . .

Letters like these demonstrate the real impact on our troops from the President’s policy. And they are reinforced

by the testimony I have heard at Armed Services. Over and over again, we have heard about the deterioration of our military readiness caused by overdeployment of our troops. Consider that today, as a result of the strain of the war, we currently have no active duty or Reserve brigades considered combat-ready in the Continental U.S., leaving our Nation dangerously unprepared and vulnerable if needed to respond to other global threats or domestic emergencies. . . .

Yesterday, I read the new classified National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq. What I found in this report was the same as the unclassified version that has been reported in the press; that we have a deteriorating security situation in Iraq whose fundamental causes were identified as political, not military. This finding completely dovetails with the findings of the Iraq Study Group who came to the exact same conclusion.

Instead of absorbing the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report and the National Intelligence Estimate and surging diplomacy and political solutions, the President instead has opted to escalate the war by sending 21,500 more troops into the middle of a violent sectarian conflict. . . .

President Bush has made his choice. Now it is Congress' turn as a coequal branch of government to make ours. I firmly believe that the passage of this resolution will go down in history as the first stirrings of life from a Congress that has been in an Iraq stranglehold for four long years. It is an honor to be part of this history on behalf of one of the districts that had the courage to vote for change last November, 100 days ago, and I will support resolution 63.

**Rep. James Oberstar
(D-Minn.)**

Mr. Speaker, this is the moment that a majority of Americans who voted last November have been waiting for, a time when Congress does something about Iraq. And that something that the people asked of us, is to get us out of Iraq. The resolution before us will not of itself get U.S. forces out of Iraq, but to paraphrase Winston Churchill, if it is not the end, it is at least the beginning of the end.

Our President is having trouble understanding the message from the American people. It is a simple message that I hear every time I go back home to Minnesota: Time to bring our troops home with honor. The people are telling me our mission in Iraq is accomplished. The President already declared victory. The goals of the U.S. invasion have been met.

Iraq's army was defeated, Saddam Hussein removed from power and brought to judgment. The Iraqi people held elections to establish a new government. Mission accomplished. Time to bring the troops home with honor.



No weapons of mass destruction were found, despite extensive searches. The Iraqis have a government, they have an army, a police force. There is no further purpose of American policy to be served by a continued military presence in Iraq.

What remains in Iraq is religious warfare between Sunni and Shi'a, with our troops caught in the crossfire. This is not the job our troops signed up for. This is not the war President Bush sold to Congress. People are telling the President, it is time to bring the troops home and to do it with honor.

President Bush has said he is concerned this resolution is prejudging the outcome of our involvement in Iraq. I would say the outcome is not in doubt. We have spent and are continuing to spend \$9 billion a month in Iraq; 3,122 of our servicemen and women have been killed; 23,550-plus have been wounded; tens of thousands more Iraqis killed and wounded. The violence is escalating, our troops are the targets.

I do not think this resolution prejudices anything. The facts speak for themselves. And the people are saying bring the troops home with honor. I did not support this war at its outset. We had Saddam Hussein contained. Al-Qaeda was not in Iraq. We had a job to do in Afghanistan. I supported going into Afghanistan to capture Osama bin Laden. But I saw no clear rationale for sending troops into combat in Iraq.

The resolution does offer a statement of support for the troops. Their service is an extraordinary gift. They volunteer to leave their homes and families, and risk their lives every day, at the order of the President. All they ask is that we never ask them to go to conflict unless that conflict is absolutely necessary and in the national interest.

Lieutenant General William Odom, in a recent article in the *Washington Post* said, about the question that we have to continue to fight in order to support the troops, has anyone asked the troops? During their first tours, many may have favored staying the course. But now in their second, third, fourth tours, he writes, many are changing their minds.

We see no evidence of that in the news stories about unhappy troops being sent back to Iraq. The strangest aspect of the rationale, General Odom writes, for continuing the war is the implication that our troops are somehow responsible for deciding to continue the President's course.

That political and moral responsibility belongs to the President, not to the troops. Didn't Harry Truman make it clear that the buck stops in the Oval Office? The President keeps dodging it. Where does it stop, General Odom asks, with Congress? And that is why we are here today to say it is up to us to make a definitive statement with this resolution, a statement that it is time to end the U.S. involvement in Iraq, to bring the troops home with honor. And then if the President does not heed, then we must take more vigorous steps, steps that I voted for in coming to end the U.S. involvement in Vietnam over 32 years ago.

If that is what it takes, then we have to say that the buck stops with us in the Congress to stop the U.S. engagement in Iraq.