

Transcript: Rothman Opposes Iraq War Escalation in Speech

Transcript: Speech Against the President's Escalation of the Iraq War

The following remarks were delivered by Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ) on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on January 11, 2007. Rep. Rothman has also written an op-ed on this subject, "The War in Iraq Needs to End, Not Escalate."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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