

## Matsui to Vote in Opposition to the Iraq War, & the Proposed Escalation – We should be bringing troops home

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We should be ending this war &hellip; not escalating it.”

Friday, February 16, 2007

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Washington, DC – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) addressed the U.S. House of Representatives today, Friday, February 16, 2007, as the debate concluded on H. Con. Res. 63, disapproving the decision of the President to deploy more than 20,000 additional United States combat troops to Iraq. The resolution is expected to pass on a bipartisan basis today. Below is the text of the Congresswoman’s floor statement (as prepared for delivery):

[Click here to watch Congresswoman Matsui address the House of Representatives.](#)

“Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful today. Finally, four years into a very controversial war, Congress will begin to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities as representatives of the People. This week, every Member of the House of Representatives has had an opportunity to express their views on the war in Iraq. And today, every Member will cast their vote for or against the President’s escalation of the war. This is only right. For my part, I believe the President’s proposed escalation would be a tragic mistake. Our need for a change in direction could not be more clear. But rather than change direction &hellip; the President proposes that we continue down our current, disastrous path &hellip; only at a faster pace and with more human life placed in harm’s way. We should be bringing troops home &hellip; not sending more there. We should be ending this war &hellip; not escalating it. Considering this resolution is only the first step of many Congress will need to take to force a change in direction. But as Thomas Jefferson once said: ‘Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.’ Congress writes that chapter with this resolution &hellip; but it is only the first chapter. Sadly &hellip; the burden created by the lack of honesty and wisdom this Administration has brought to this conflict is shouldered by our brave men and women in uniform. Two years ago, I spoke with a group of women in Sacramento whose husbands were serving in the National Guard in Iraq. One woman told me she had to buy her husband a Kevlar vest and a canteen before he deployed to Iraq &hellip; something all too many families were doing for their loved ones because the military wasn’t providing it. A short time later, the Administration assured the public that the issue had been addressed. And yet &hellip; just this week &hellip; we heard reports that the Army lacks armored Humvees and other equipment necessary for the troop increase the President is implementing. Once again &hellip; a failure in vision and planning. And once again &hellip; our troops pay the price. Escalation of this conflict

will further increase the strain on a military that is already stretched to the breaking point. Every Member of this Chamber knows about this strain. &ldquo;Earlier this month, I spoke with a friend and Reservist in Sacramento named Richard Beach. Richard shipped out to Iraq four years ago as a chaplain in the Army Reserves. He&rsquo;s home now, but he still keeps in touch with his old unit. &ldquo;Richard shared with me a note he sent to some of his fellow members of the 114th. He wrote &hellip; and I quote, &lsquo;I remember four years ago we were getting ready for our trip to Fort Lewis and then on to Iraq. I hope as the fourth anniversary of the war comes up you are all in good health and living life to the fullest. I too pray that soon this war will end, and we will stop sending our soldiers off to war.&rsquo; &ldquo;Four years later &hellip; he reports that many of the same soldiers and their families are making the same sacrifice. But that is the heartbreaking reality here. &ldquo;Implementing the President&rsquo;s policy will mean that members of his regiment &hellip; along with so many others &hellip; will have to endure more and more of the back-to-back deployments to Iraq. &ldquo;The notion of &lsquo;shared sacrifice&rsquo; is something that helped make this country great. Americans are strong believers in &lsquo;shared sacrifice.&rsquo; But all too often in this war &hellip; only our troops and their families share the sacrifice. &ldquo;That is too much to ask on behalf of policies that have not worked. The Administration offers us scant reason to believe this troop increase will work when it has tried and failed with several previous troop increases. &ldquo;This proposal offers us nothing but &ldquo;more of the same.&rdquo; &ldquo;Our brave men and women in uniform have done everything that has been asked of them. It is our political leadership who has failed. &ldquo;There&rsquo;s a saying &ndash; &lsquo;it takes two people to speak the truth: one to speak it, and one to hear.&rsquo; &ldquo;If recent history is any guide, the Administration will choose not to hear this truth &hellip; this even though the American people spoke it loud and clear in the last election. &ldquo;We must change direction &hellip; and that starts today with this resolution expressing opposition to the President&rsquo;s escalation. &ldquo;I thank Chairman Skelton, Chairman Lantos, and Congressman Jones for offering this bipartisan resolution &hellip; and I urge my colleagues to join me in voting to oppose this deeply mistaken policy.&rdquo; ###