

"Mission Impossible" in Iraq

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Three years ago yesterday, President Bush declared Mission Accomplished in Iraq. Because of the Administration's miscalculations and failures, the War in Iraq can be better described as Mission Impossible.

Many experts believe Iraq is on the brink of a civil war, and some believe one has already begun. Thousands of our troops have died, and American taxpayers are spending \$11 million an hour to pay for the mission. Elections have not ushered in stability, and instead, the top commander in Iraq last week predicted that insurgent attacks would rise in the coming weeks. According to the State Department, about half of the worldwide terrorist attacks last year were in Iraq. Iran has been strengthened by the dissolution of its arch rival.

The American people and the Iraqi people are paying a terrible price for the Bush Administration's rush to war. The Administration used faulty intelligence in order to rush the American people into a war with insufficient international support and no plan to win the peace. Now, the presence of American forces on the ground is creating targets for an insurgency that's spreading. It is no wonder that over 80% of the Iraqi people believe it is time for American troops to leave.

Though it is underreported, a majority of House Democrats voted against the War in Iraq. Now, our Caucus is beginning to take the lead efforts to deploy our troops from Iraq so that they can take the fight to Bin Laden and terrorist cells around the world. The Out-of-Iraq caucus, of which I was a founding member, is over 70 members strong. We will be working hard to pass the Murtha Resolution, which would strategically redeploy our troops from Iraq so that they can focus on real and immediate threats to our security.

The Bush Administration has left us without any good options in Iraq. The worst option is staying the course and continuing to spend \$96 billion dollars a year on the war. With that money, the United States could have insured 165,571,302 children for one year or funded world-wide AIDS programs for 27 years.

A wide majority of Americans have turned against the War in Iraq. They are no longer willing to accept the drain in lives or resources the war has wrought. Three years after he declared "Mission Accomplished" in Iraq, it is time for President Bush to recognize his Administration's failures and declare a new direction by beginning the redeployment of our troops.