

It is interesting listening to the republican fog machine starting to churn out its smoke surrounding the resolution we are going to be discussing this week. I listen to my friend from Texas and from Georgia talking about the innocent people that are going to suffer under the approaches that we're talking about. It is interesting that polls show that the people in Iraq--the majority of them--think it's alright for the insurgents to shoot and kill our soldiers. They are not just fighting us, they are 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 they've been in power realize 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 five years--and to 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 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've stripped this down.

I heard my friend from Texas disparage the retired generals and admirals who have come forward with their deep concern of the flawed strategy and implementation in Iraq. These are men and women who have proven their dedication to this country, who, in three 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 will take those retired commanders every time. They have been right. If the president 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 try and stop the genocide in the Balkans. 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 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've had over 50 oversight hearings now in the

first month, more meaningful oversight than in the last five years of the runs, 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, and the Republicans would have no part in it. Now the American people are seeing it. We're seeing in the appropriations process the 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'll 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're going to make sure 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're 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 runs on the other side of the aisle.