

Thank you to everyone who responded to my question about redeployment from Iraq. As you many know, I believe that America needs to begin removing our troops from Iraq and that, in contrast to what [President Bush has suggested](#) , I believe we should let Iraqis know that we do not intend to [permanently station our military](#) in Iraq. As a cosponsor of a [bill](#) prohibiting the establishment of permanent bases in Iraq (and stating that the U.S. can not exercise economic control over Iraq's oil resources), I was pleased to note the [overwhelming support](#) for the measure which the House passed on Wednesday by a vote of 399-24. I respect the position and thoughts of those who disagree with my positions, and appreciate that so many of you took the time to write to me with your intensely personal stories and thoughts on America's policies in Iraq. I received hundreds of passionate and well thought out responses to the [survey](#) , and I would like to share some especially poignant comments with you:

- "I do not believe we can stop the Civil War from happening...I feel too many American Sons and Daughters have given their life for a lost cause and we need to back out. We can't turn our backs completely, we will need to reach out to the countries in that region and deal with the political aspect that will hopefully arise if one or the other group can gain power. Perhaps if we threaten to leave, it will force the Sunnis' and Shiites to form the necessary political alliances but I know that is incredible naive. On the other hand the region will possible have one less country name as it will all become Iran.

- "I'm a Navy veteran and have a vested interest in how our troops are deployed and used throughout the world. While I'd like our troops to come home today or redeploy in the political parlance of the day, Iraq will explode into a civil bloodbath, more so than it is now. We cannot and should not let that happen regardless of how we got into the mess. What I'd like to see is the Rules of Engagement change to allow our troops to engage the enemy without first reviewing a politically correct checklist designed to protect the enemy and get our troops killed in the process. Sir, you have an excellent reputation among your constituents and I share some of it, although I am an Independent voter. Congress's approval rating is in the mud for a reason and both sides of the aisle share the blame... Dems more so than the GOP. Do something about homeland security and our borders, support our troops as they should be supported not with words but with policies that allow them to be the warriors they are, and quit battling among yourselves and with the President."

- "As young Americans, we are taught the Golden Rule, but at the same time, we are taught to fight for what we believe in, for what's right, to not let others walk on us and that there is indeed a season for war... The season for this fight has ended. Only fear maintains it. Fear is something that will be present in all human lives until the day we die. To live in peace is a constant battle, yet a worthy one. There are also many other battles for Americans to choose, so many causes to defend and evils to banish. Let us now redeploy. Let us move to another front, whether it be fighting other corruptions within the law, the war on drugs, the war on hunger, the war on domestic abuse, the war on pollution, the war on the many physical and

mental diseases, and so on.”

- “The people of Iraq have been killing each other for years, and I do not believe we are going to stop it. It really struck a chord in me when I read about U.S forces having to battle the Iraqi police. I thought the Iraqi police was supposed to be on the side of the coalition...[A]t times I am ashamed of our government because of all of the lies it has told to justify this war and the death and HUGE expense it is causing. As a peace officer myself, I am held to a higher standard than the public norm when it comes to honesty and telling the truth. If I were to tell even a nano's worth of lies that this administration has told the American people to justify this war in the name of freedom, well, I would have been fired, fined, received a jail term, and been labeled a convicted felon for the rest of my life in this country. Yet, it's ironic that the person in the highest office in the nation can tell lie after lie, and still remain in office. Talk about hypocrisy! Bring the troops home. Now!”

- “As a Vietnam veteran who witnessed 10 years of rising body counts, I was against going to war. The Iraq situation demanded diplomatic measures and experiencing even one combat death was not justified. The post 9-11 fervor led us to making a bad decision. As much as I would like to see our troops home now, WE have created a situation that my conscience tells me we must continue to improve in order to avoid a civil war. The dilemma is that we may have crossed the point of no-return. Like Vietnam, the war seems unwinnable. Too much division exists in our country and the negative impact on the morale of our troops is inevitable. I wish I was smart enough to suggest a solution. As a veteran and American, I was always taught to “finish what you started”. It's not so simple here.”

- “Redeploy” is the operative word! As a former USG Middle East (Arab World) Specialist, and a retired combat arms officer, one of the big problems I see is all this hubbub about “The War.”...The classic definition of war is a conflict between nation states with specific goals and objectives. We accomplished our goals (at least those publicly stated) of toppling the governing regime of a “rogue nation” in the “Axis of Evil,” and resolving the question of weapons of mass destruction... What is needed is a realization that we're now embroiled in a situation we no longer “own.” The conflict in Iraq has degenerated into a civil war, and our response needs to be a “redeployment of mission,” and force restructuring accordingly.”

- “I have a son in the U.S. Marines who is going through his second tour of duty in Iraq. I receive accurate reports of what's going on in country. Our politicians, and this includes yourself, are playing politics instead of letting our servicemen and women do what the USA sent them there to do. You will lose my vote and I will share my opinion with all I know if you don't revise your position on the war...Your position on Iraq is wrong. I worked and lived in the Middle East. The strategy may not be perfect but no one has a better idea of how we can stop a society from teaching 6 year old children how to hate and 12 year olds to kill.”

- “Americans are all united in recognizing the great debts we owe to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in our nation’s armed forces. These brave men and women risk their lives for our country, and American policymakers must show our deep respect for them by sending them into combat only when all other alternatives have been exhausted. Unfortunately, I believe that was not the case when the President chose to send American troops into Iraq.”

- “I am against the war...I think it is irresponsible for the U.S. to make a big mess in another country thousands of miles away without giving that country a means by which to clean it up. My brother has served in Iraq. He loves his country and truly believes he was doing something

good over there. Unfortunately he suffers from post-traumatic-stress-disorder. He hasn't been officially diagnosed as he is so depressed he won't even leave his house. Also, he, and many of his Army brothers are under the impression that psychological conditions are for the weak-minded and also that if they admit to such a condition and get out of duty, that they will be letting their unit down. This may be partly true as far as them having trained together for a long time and therefore being able to anticipate thought patterns, movements, etc. that would be critical in combat situations, but how can they help each other if they are all suffering mentally? Also, my brother recently trained other Army Nat'l Guardsmen for combat. These were men that worked as cooks and other non-combat related jobs. These men were trained for a total of 1 month. My brother told me that they weren't ready and that they were probably going to die. How could anyone, in good conscience, send someone to Iraq knowing that they are not adequately prepared and will more than likely die? I think that perhaps the U.S. should focus more on aggressively training and arming Iraqi troops so that they can help themselves.”

- “Regardless of whether or not we have entered into this war for just causes; we now are nonetheless committed to do the job correctly. Leaving Iraq in a shambles without hope of democracy going forward would be as dishonorable as entering the war unjustly...We must successfully complete the task of establishing stability in this region (which historically has been one of the most unstable regions of the world, for as long as we have recorded history). We must give the Iraqi people the hope and promise of a democratic society in which they might be free of tyrannical dictatorships that have lorded over them for decades...We must do whatever is necessary at this point to complete our mission...and then, we must bring our troops home promptly. But not before the job is done. “

- “Please stop the illegal acts done by the Bush administration by holding them responsible for this illegal war, the overstepping of the original congressional authorization for war (Iraq operation is increasing, not decreasing our vulnerability), the unreasonable reductions of liberty (for example, the recent Executive Order equating political protesters with terrorists), the outing of secret agents and entire operations, illegal torture and renderings, loss of habeus corpus, obstructing justice in the 911 investigation by destroying evidence and lying to Congress, illegal collusion with Enron, Katrina response, and unreasonable neglect of our infrastructure (New Orleans was flooded because of levy failure at the areas where the levy repairs had been delayed by years, which was predictable), and please support impeachment of Cheney then Bush, and censure and retract all of this administrations illegal laws and statements. We should start with restoring presidential signatures on the International Bill of Rights/War Crimes treaty and the Kyoto Principles. Congress should be the decision maker for treaties signed by the President.”