

## Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Last week, Congress debated the President's proposal to add 20,000 troops to Iraq. Every Member was guaranteed five minutes of Floor time; and between Tuesday and Friday, over three hundred participated.

There were two arguments against the resolution that troubled me: first, that the debate itself gave "aid and comfort to the enemy" and demoralized our troops and second, that Congress has no business "managing" a war.

In the first place, Congress has every business debating and voting on troop increases. In fact, that business was given to us by the framers of the Constitution. Article I, Section 8 specifically says:

"Congress shall have the power to ... declare war, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water ... To provide for organizing, arming, and disciplining, the Militia, and for governing such Part of them as may be employed in the Service of the United States, reserving to the States respectively, the Appointment of the Officers, and the Authority of training the Militia according to the discipline prescribed by Congress ..."

If we can't exercise this Constitutional oversight responsibility, why have a Congress...or a Constitution?

Second, I don't believe that democracy in action can ever give aid and comfort to our enemies. On the contrary, the expression of freedom is what they fear the most. In fact, I believe that the best psychological warfare against our enemies may be CSPAN! I want them to see how democracy looks and how it sounds. I want them to see the difference between our freedom and their tyranny. I want them to witness people disagreeing with words rather than blowing each other up.

As I said in my speech, our troops aren't afraid of democracy being waged on the Floor of the House. This is because it represents the best we have to offer the world. We fight in the defense of freedom. We do not surrender freedom in the defense of fighting. That should be the profound difference between the values that empower our military versus the values that drove other powers in history.

I'm not willing to wave the white flag and surrender Congressional debate to our adversaries. I'd rather wave the Congressional Record, with all its verbiage and blemishes and disagreements. This is because it tells the real story of America: a place where we have the right to agree, the right to disagree, even the right to remain silent. But, most important is that we have these rights.