

*"We start today. No more troops. No more phony intelligence. No more blank checks. We must end this war."*

Washington, DC -- Rep. Peter Welch expressed his vigorous opposition to the President's Iraq policy in a floor statement today.

Welch's statement, as a member of the Rules Committee, began what is anticipated to be a 36-hour, week-long debate on the President's escalation proposal in the U.S. House.

"We start today. No more troops. No more phony intelligence. No more blank checks. We must end this war," said Welch.

Welch believes the up or down vote for or against the escalation will be a clear vote of no confidence in the President's Iraq policy and a first step toward ending the war in Iraq.

"Top military commanders have made it clear that no amount of American military force can take the place of the political consensus required to end Iraq's civil war," added Welch. "This resolution is not the final word: it is just the beginning... America must change the direction of this war. If the President won't, we will."

The language of the resolution in the U.S. House supports the troops serving in Iraq and opposes the President's plan to send more than 20,000 additional soldiers to Iraq. A vote is expected Friday.

Welch's full statement is below:

**Peter Welch of Vermont**

**Statement on Ending the Iraq War**  
**February 13, 2007**

M. Speaker, today we begin debate on the question of whether to escalate the war in Iraq.

The Administration's policy on Iraq has failed. It failed yesterday, it's failing today, and it will fail tomorrow.

These failures have left America weakened -- not strengthened.

Today, we must chart a new course: *We must end the war in Iraq.*

Each one of us is immeasurably proud of the service of our troops. They answered the call to duty; they have done their job.

I am particularly proud of our Vermont troops and families. No state has sacrificed more per capita in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan than our state of Vermont.

While our men and women in uniform have done their jobs, the President's policies have failed this country and failed our troops demonstrably and repeatedly.

M. Speaker, it is now *our* responsibility to chart a new direction: one that brings our troops home, restores diplomacy to our foreign policy, and improves the readiness of our military.

We start today. No more troops. No more phony intelligence. No more blank checks.

*We must end this war.*

Top military commanders have made it clear that no amount of American military force can take the place of the political consensus required to end Iraq's civil war.

We face two questions: what is best for America and what is best for Iraq?

The answer to both questions is to *end this war*.

M. Speaker, this resolution is not the final word: *it is just the beginning*.

It is an opportunity to provide new leadership. And I will work with my colleagues on legislation that will:

- Accelerate the training of Iraqi security forces;
- Redeploy our troops within 6 months;
- Prohibit permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq; AND
- Direct appropriations to protecting our troops and restoring military readiness.

The President has left us no choice. America must change the direction of this war. If the President won't, we will.

Today, we choose which path offers us the best hope for success: escalating the military conflict or taking the first step in a new direction.

To strengthen America, we *must* choose a new path.

Top generals said it. The bipartisan Iraq Study Group confirmed it. And the American people demand it.

M. Speaker, the troops have done their job. Now we must do ours.