

Iraq War

Is the plan to add more soldiers a good idea?

PRO

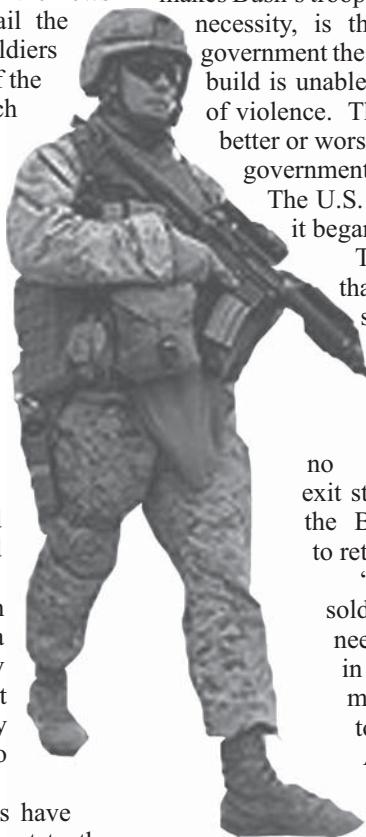
New strategy necessary; troop surge will help U.S. credibility

JOEL DOBBEN
EDITORIAL WRITER

Things are not going well in the conflict in Iraq. Every day in the news more and more reports detail the violent deaths of American soldiers due to the current strategies of the Bush Administration, which are simply not working. Many Americans and political leaders are calling for withdrawal of troops. However, President George W. Bush is advocating the deployment of more troops to Iraq. In a televised address Jan. 10, Bush said a troop increase of 21,500 is necessary to curb the violence in Baghdad.

Few are in favor of the new plan as Democrats and Republicans alike have voiced their opposition to the surge. U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton called the troop increase a "losing strategy," and a "very bad mission," and at least seven Republican senators say they are in flat opposition to the surge.

Because so many soldiers have already died in a war irrelevant to the



well-being of ordinary Americans, many leaders naturally wish to stop more bloodshed for soldiers. What makes their stance unreasonable and what makes Bush's troop surge an unfortunate necessity, is that the young Iraqi government the United States helped build is unable to control the cycle of violence. The United States, for better or worse, interfered with the government and society of Iraq. The U.S. needs to finish what it began.

There is no question that with the long standing quagmire in Iraq many brave young Americans are dying for no reason. A definite exit strategy is needed for the Bush Administration to retain its credibility.

"Although the U.S. soldiers definitely need to make peace in Iraq, Bush and the military leaders need to withdraw before America embarrasses itself and more innocent people die," Sophomore

Chloe Lindstrom said.

The Bush Administration forever changed Iraq, setting up free elections and planting the seeds of a democratic government.

However, the administration naïvely expected the Iraqis to meet the soldiers overthrowing Saddam Hussein's regime with open arms. Instead, many Iraqis resent the American presence, according to ABC News.

Now, war has erupted between militants from the Islamic Shiite and Sunni sects. A United Nations report released Jan. 16 said that at least 34,000 Iraqi civilians died in acts of violence last year, according to the *Chicago Tribune*.

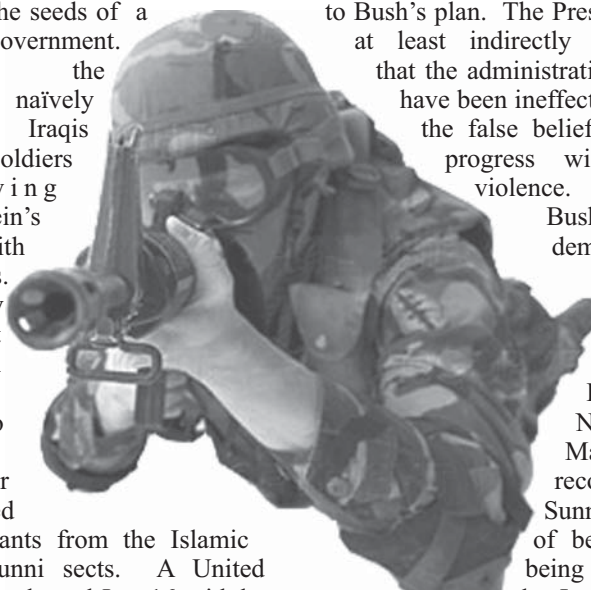
It does not matter if American presence in Iraq disrupted the uneasy peace between the Sunnis and Shiites under the Hussein regime, leading to the increased violence. The U.S. military has interfered in Iraq affairs, and because the new Iraqi democracy cannot control

the violence, America needs to finish what was started.

There are many positive components to Bush's plan. The President has now at least indirectly acknowledged that the administration's strategies have been ineffective because of the false belief that political progress will quell the violence.

Bush's speech also demonstrates that he realizes that the Iraq government under Shiite Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki needs to reconcile with the Sunnis, and a series of benchmarks are being set in place for the Iraqis to achieve peace, according to *USA Today*.

Although it will certainly come with the possibility of more American casualties, Bush's troop surge is necessary so that the operation begun three years ago can be finished. No matter what the outcome, the U.S. needs to resolve the conflict in Iraq so that the operation can finally be concluded.



CON

More troops means more fatalities, step in wrong direction

JULIE CARLISLE
EDITORIAL EDITOR

Vietnam is often remembered as a war from which the U.S. gained nothing, a war that cost the lives of more than 50,000 U.S. soldiers and hundreds of billions of dollars. Vietnam was an embarrassing political blunder on the part of the U.S. government.

The U.S. government seems to be on the verge of making the same mistakes in Iraq. The Iraq War is beginning to look more and more like Vietnam. It has already cost the lives of more than 3,000 soldiers and more than \$300 billion. Additionally, on Jan. 10, President George W. Bush announced a new military strategy that will send 21,500 more soldiers to Iraq. The U.S. government should not send more troops to Iraq because public opinion supports pulling soldiers out of Iraq, not sending more in. Also, adding more soldiers is likely to lead to many more fatalities.

Many Americans have begun to question Bush's policy in Iraq. As a result, a majority of Americans no longer support Bush. According to the latest *Associated Press* survey, only 35 percent of Americans believe that going

to war was the right decision and the President's approval rating is only 32 percent. With numbers so obviously against the war, Bush should consider listening to public opinion and pulling out of Iraq, not putting more soldiers in danger.

Members of the Armed Forces are questioning Bush's plan to send a surge of soldiers to Iraq. "We would fully support... the idea of putting more soldiers into

Iraq if there is a solid military reason for doing that, if there is something to be gained. We do not believe that just adding numbers for the sake of adding numbers- just thickening the mix- is the way to go," Marine Corp Commandant

General James Conway said to *Time Magazine*.

The War in Iraq has created many



Angry Americans War protestors demonstrate their opinion of the Iraq War in Chicago in 2005. Protestors have held similar protests all over the U.S. since the beginning of the war in 2003, and Bush should listen to public opinion and consider withdrawing troops.

political enemies of the U.S., and adding more troops instead of withdrawing them is likely to anger countries that already do not support U.S. involvement in Iraq. "U.S. presence in Iraq is making more enemies than friends. The government

invaded Iraq to prevent another terrorist attack, but now the U.S. is probably more likely to be attacked," Senior Elaine Coldren said.

Bush argues that added soldiers will provide the help necessary to finally win the War in Iraq, and he has been reluctant to pull out of Iraq because he believes the country would be very unstable without U.S. troops there. However, Bush should be more concerned about the state of the U.S. and less concerned about the state of Iraq. "We have reached the point where we need to ask the question whether it is more important to preserve the country of Iraq with its façade of democratic government, or protect our own national security interests," former Army Major General John Batiste said to *Time Magazine*.

Bush's new war strategy of sending more soldiers to Iraq means that 21,500 more families must say goodbye to loved ones who will be called up to serve. Twenty-one thousand five hundred more soldiers will have to risk their lives in a dangerous country. Many soldiers are likely to die while taking that risk. Bush should listen to the opinions of the majority of Americans and rethink his plan for Iraq.

Courtesy of AP