

Washington, DC - Congressman Charlie Gonzalez (TX-20) issued the following statement on the fifth anniversary of the war in Iraq:

"As we enter this war's sixth year, it's more apparent than ever that the Iraqis' self-inflicted sectarian differences are preventing them from building on the hard fought successes of our troops. Accordingly, we can not renew a commitment to this flawed strategy as the President has done earlier today. Similarly, we can not misrepresent a reduction in troop presence to "pre-surge levels" as a change in strategy; that plan simply signals a regression to the ways of a policy that was flawed since its inception."

"Almost four thousand Americans have been killed in Iraq. Close to half a trillion American dollars have been spent on this effort and our economy at home is suffering the consequences. We've been forced to allocate these vital resources in Iraq instead of using them to fight terrorism in Afghanistan and invest in homeland security here in the United States."

"Furthermore, our reputation around the world has diminished drastically over the past five years, leaving American troops alone to fight this war without the broad international commitment and coalition that is necessary to be successful. In fact, less than 12,000 troops in Iraq are from nations other than the United States, down from 47,200 in 2003. The loss of international support has also made it difficult to engage in much needed diplomacy that will ultimately help us fight terrorism."

"These consequences are too great; this administration cannot continue to ignore them along with the lessons of history, the views of military experts, and the will of the American people when it comes to our presence in Iraq. The fact remains that political and diplomatic solutions are needed in Iraq and they cannot be delivered by our military, regardless of whether we send an additional 1,000 or 100,000 troops to war. The open-ended strategy and commitment to the war in Iraq must come to an end."

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