

claimed they have to vote for the appropriations bills to "support the troops." Kucinich said, "If we truly care about our troops, we'll get them out. It's the phoniest argument to say that a cut-off of funds will leave troops stranded in the field. There's always money in the pipeline to pay for an orderly withdrawal."

Another huge war supplemental appropriations bill will be along soon. It is time to tell DeFazio to just say no.

Lynn Porter
Eugene

SEASON OF PEACE

I am so concerned about the state of this country that I feel compelled to ask all peoples for peace. In this holy time when the light returns and when those sons and daughters of God can shine their brightest, I ask all peoples for peace. Is it truly difficult to find something in common with your neighbor? Is it easier to find what you do not share? What beliefs you do not share? What values you do not share?

I ask for peace from all peoples. Look to your neighbor this season. How can you serve him or her during this holy time? This is

all people's place: to serve others. Can you look to your neighbor for inspiration this season? What do they do right? What do you like about them? What beliefs and values do you share?

I can share a few of my own that I'm sure most people would agree upon. I want my child to be happy and safe. I want to be comfortable. I want my family to be safe. I want to be happy. Do we not all share these core values?

I want light to shine upon us all this winter. Give presents to those who truly deserve them. Give presents to yourself. For God's sake, please, give presents to your neighbors. Wish them all the happiness they can hold. Hold this also for yourself.

I ask for peace from all peoples.

Toni Gabriella Rilla
Violence Prevention Inc.
Eugene

LETTERS POLICY: We welcome letters on all topics and will print as many as space allows, with priority given to timely local issues. Please limit length to 250 words, keep submissions to once a month and include your address and phone number for our files. E-mail to editor@eugeneweekly.com (please put "letters" in the subject line), fax to 484-4044 or mail to 1251 Lincoln, Eugene 97401.

Kumbaya Dammit BY DAN CAROL

Escrow Exit Strategy

A commitment that actually benefits Iraq

Like many of us, I have been struggling with the tragic fact that if we leave Iraq, we leave a horrible mess behind, but if we stay, the mess will probably get worse due to the problems caused by America's military presence.

Now the Iraq Study Group is saying last week we should embed more troops, try more diplomacy and then hope for the best.

Speaker Pelosi has indicated that Democrats are willing to work with President Bush to end the war.

Sounds like a long dance to me.

So how about this approach to speed things up and get our troops home faster:

1) We call on Peter DeFazio and John Murtha to propose what we might call the "Escrow Exit Strategy" from their key posts on the House Appropriations committee – the committee that controls the flow of funds.

2) We remind ourselves and all Americans that we "own" the problem, because we do. Colin ("You Break It, You Own It") Powell was right about that one.

3) We ask Pentagon bean-counters to figure out what it would cost to stay there if we stayed there as long as big kids like the Iraq Study Group want us to – let's say for the sake of argument that it's another two years, \$150 billion of taxpayer dollars, plus American lives.

4) We then leave as soon as possible and escrow the money we'd save for the benefit of the Iraqi people and the reconstruction of that country – because it is the fundamentally right thing to do.

5) I think ALL compassionate progressives and conservatives should oppose our country simply pulling out without making some sort of HARD commitment to clean up the mess we've made. Multi-nation talks are nice; redistribution of Iraqi oil revenues are merely theoretical; but a hard commitment to rebuilding is the real deal. Do we have the will to stay the course on that?

6) Suggest we call in some intelligent mix of our allies, the UN, Middle East neighbors and some internationally wise set of people to work with the U.S. government to set conditions that would govern the release of that money so long as various markers of progress are achieved. Perhaps the Iraq Study Group folks can help set these benchmarks.

We just can't leave, but we can't keep throwing money down a rat-hole either. So let's commit to paying for the mess we started but escrow the funds so that the money is there as an incentive for progress, peace and prosperity.

Dan Carol is a Eugene-based political consultant. His regular postings can be found at





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