

LCpl Anthony Aguirre dreamed his whole life of taking this oath and becoming a member of this elite fighting force. Anthony was from Channelview, Texas. At a young age, he knew he wanted to be a Marine. He felt so compelled to serve our country that he took every opportunity to become involved in any military program that he could find, like the Junior ROTC at Channelview High School.

When he was in the Junior ROTC, Anthony was the company commander. During his senior year in high school, he achieved the rank of cadet captain. Many of those who were involved with the ROTC with Anthony remember him as a patriot. He always had a sense of duty to this country. Even after graduation, Anthony often stopped by the high school to proudly talk with the Junior ROTC cadets about the Marines. According to the ROTC instructor, Anthony wanted to be a Marine because he thought it was the toughest of military U.S. services.

Lance Corporal Aguirre joined the United States Marine Corps 1 year after graduating from Channelview High School and became a member of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force in Hawaii.

His sister, Christine, said that Anthony thought of doing nothing else with his life but being in the Marine Corps. So Anthony Aguirre joined the United States Marine Corps. He served our country in Iraq, but he met a warrior's fate a few days ago. This is a photograph of Anthony Aguirre. Anthony was killed in Iraq, and the funeral for him was today.

Let me tell you a little bit about the funeral, Mr. Speaker. As the funeral procession passed through the streets of Channelview, estimates were that over 8,000 people were there from the schools, the local refineries, the fire department and the neighborhoods. They stood on the side of the road for miles waving American flags for this Marine.

Anthony Aguirre was buried today in Highland, Texas. The high school flag was flown at half mast in his honor, and later the flag was given to his sister, Christine Castillo, and his brother, Earnesto Salinas. Tony had numerous other siblings and cousins.

Now I want to tell you how he died, Mr. Speaker. On February 26, 2007, at the age of 20, in an act of fearless courage, LCpl Aguirre put his life on the line for his brothers in arms. And while fighting the forces of evil in Al Anbar Province in Iraq, Anthony stepped on an improvised explosive device. IEDs, as they are called, are a coward's way of killing U.S. soldiers, women, children and the elderly.

But he didn't immediately jump, as would be a reflection or a reaction for most of us. He kept his foot on the IED and he told the other 20 Marines standing around him to clear the area and take cover. When he saw that they were out of harm's way, he took his

foot off the device. He gave his life so that other Marines could live.

When this group of Marines reported back to their commander, they told him that Tony had just saved their lives. The commander immediately knew they were referring to LCpl Anthony Aguirre.

Amazing men, these young guns of the Marine Corps of today.

On a road called Crosby-Lynchburg in my district, there are flags mounted along this rural road in honor of the brave life of Lance Corporal Aguirre. And as the community laid another one of America's sons to rest today, the catalog of history is etched with another name of an extraordinary Texas hero and Marine.

Lance Corporal Aguirre died as he lived, for the Marines, for his brothers in arms.

Shakespeare put it best in Henry V when he echoes Aguirre's commitment to fellow warriors. He says, From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.

We shall remember Lance Corporal Aguirre. Semper Fi, Lance Corporal Aguirre. Semper Fi.

And that's just the way it is.

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE SCANDAL AT WALTER REED

THE SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the scandal at Walter Reed is not an isolated incident. It is directly related to our foreign policy of interventionism. There is a pressing need to reassess our now widely accepted role as the world's lone superpower. If we don't, we are destined to reduce our Nation to something far less powerful.

It has always been politically popular for politicians to promise they will keep us out of foreign wars. Likewise, it has been popular to advocate ending prolonged and painful conflicts, like the war in Korea and Vietnam, and now Iraq.

As recent as the campaign of 2000, it was quite popular to condemn nation building and reject the policy of policing the world in the wake of our involvement in Kosovo and Somalia. We were even promised a more humble foreign policy.

Nobody wins elections by promising to take us to war. But, once elected, many politicians greatly exaggerate the threat posed by a potential enemy, and the people too often carelessly ac-

cept the dubious reasons given to justify wars.

□ 1800

Opposition arises only when the true costs are felt here at home.

A foreign policy of interventionism costs so much money that we're forced to close military bases in the United States even as we're building them overseas. Interventionism is never good fiscal policy. Interventionism symbolizes an attitude of looking outward, toward empire, while diminishing the importance of maintaining a constitutional republic.

We close bases here at home—some want to close Walter Reed—while building bases in Arab and Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia. We worry about foreign borders while ignoring our own. We build permanent outposts in Muslim holy lands, occupy territory and prop up puppet governments. This motivates suicide terrorism against us.

Our policies naturally lead to resentment, which in turn leads to prolonged wars and increased casualties. We waste billions of dollars in Iraq while bases like Walter Reed fall into disrepair. This undermines our ability to care for the thousands of wounded we should have anticipated despite the rosy predictions that we would be greeted as liberators in Iraq.

Now comes the outrage.

Now Congress holds hearings.

Now comes the wringing of hands. I guess better late than never.

Clean it up. Paint the walls. Make Walter Reed look neat and tidy. But this won't solve our problems. We must someday look critically at the shortcomings of our foreign policy, a policy that needlessly and foolishly intervenes in places where we have no business being.

Voters spoke very clearly in November: They want the war to end. Yet Congress has taken no steps to defund or end a war it never should have condoned in the first place.

On the contrary, Congress plans to spend another \$100 billion or more in an upcoming Iraq funding bill, more than even the administration has requested. The 2007 military budget, \$700 billion, apparently is not enough. All of this is done under the slogan of supporting the troops, even though our policy guarantees more Americans will die and Walter Reed will continue to receive tens of thousands of casualties.

Every problem Congress and the administration creates requires more money to fix. The mantra remains the same: Spend more money even though we don't have it; borrow from the Chinese, or just print it. This policy of interventionism is folly, and it cannot continue forever. It will end, either because we wake up or because we go broke.

Interventionism always leads to unanticipated consequences and blowback, like a weakened, demoralized military; exploding deficits; billions of dollars wasted; increased inflation; less economic growth; an unstable

currency; painful stock market corrections; political demagoguery; lingering anger at home; and confusion about who is to blame.

These elements combine to create an environment that inevitably undermines personal liberty. Virtually all American wars have led to diminished civil liberties at home. Most of our mistakes can be laid at the doorstep of our failure to follow the Constitution. The Constitution, if we so desire, can provide needed guidance and a road map to restore our liberties and change our foreign policy. This is critical if we truly seek peace and prosperity.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CORRINE BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with an apology. Last week, I was in the grocery store in Jacksonville, Florida. A veteran working part time told me about a friend who was at Walter Reed, and he had pictures showing the problems that were occurring there. He walked me to the car and said that there was no way he would ever vote again for a Republican after seeing what the pictures showed.

I couldn't believe what he was describing to me of a military facility. And I told him, "You can't believe everything that you see on the Internet." The next day, the very next day, the story was in the Washington Post. I am going back to that grocery store to personally apologize to that veteran. The fact that an active duty soldier was treated this way is inconceivable.

I did not vote for this war. The military is doing the job they were sent to do. There was a flaw in the mission from the beginning, and the flaw lies with us. American soldiers have performed admirably under trying conditions, conditions they were not trained for and conditions they should not be in. We won the war but lost the occupation. Our soldiers deserve better when they get back.

We can send 484 tons of money, \$12 billion, to Iraq for who knows what, but when it comes to the well-being of those soldiers, there is no money. According to the VA, it will cost \$1.7 billion to include all veterans in the VA health care system.

What are the priorities of this administration? There are all kinds of justifications, all kinds of sanctimony, frightening the American people into supporting a \$600 billion war in Iraq.

We have a \$3 trillion budget, and we are sending nearly \$1 trillion to a country of 28 million people.

We are building an embassy in Baghdad of 104 acres. This is six times larger than the United Nations compound in New York and two-thirds the acreage of Washington's National Mall. The embassy compound, 21 buildings on 104 acres, is the size of Vatican City and will be the largest in the world. It will employ over 5,500 people. The embassy will cost over \$1 billion. This is the priority of this Bush administration.

My colleagues, this war needs to come to an end. The American people want the troops home. This was the message sent loud and clear to the Bush administration during the November elections. Yet for some reason, they just don't get the message. Nearly 70 percent of the American people want us out of Iraq, and 100 percent deplore the treatment the administration is giving the veterans at the time of their most urgent need.

I will go back to Jacksonville and apologize to this veteran. I will be able to look him in the eye and say that this will not stand. We will make sure our soldiers come back to the best care this great Nation can provide.

I am reminded, in closing, of the words of the first President of the United States, George Washington, whose words are worth repeating at this time:

"The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war, no matter how justified, shall be directly proportional as to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated and appreciated by their country."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE REALITY OF A MODERN DAY SCHOOL TEACHER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, when the question is asked, other than a family member, name one person who has made a difference in your life, the most often answered response is that of a favorite teacher. This simple response speaks volumes about the influence that an educator has on the lives of a young person and the future of our Nation.

The education profession has long been known for inadequate pay but a high job satisfaction. Teachers have been willing to forfeit material gain for the joy of seeing the eyes of their students light up when they discover a dif-

ficult concept or when they grasp a new idea. We have long understood that teachers truly shape the world by their work, and their greatest product is an educated child.

Lately, though, the job satisfaction that brought so many teachers into the profession seems to have left the classroom. Unfortunately, much of this development can be attributed to No Child Left Behind. The joy of teaching has been replaced by the pressure-filled staff meetings where educators spend their time talking, not about how to help a child learn but, rather, their school's test scores.

□ 1810

Morale in the education world has diminished, and more teachers are at wits end.

Recently, Holly Lindsay, a teacher in Lindsborg, Kansas, told me of her frustration with her profession. She writes, "I am a first-year teacher, and I am beginning to get very discouraged. I went into the teaching profession to help students learn and to encourage them to follow their dreams. However, I am finding that more and more of my time is spent preparing students for standardized tests. These tests do not prepare students for any career. They only teach students how to take a test. I am very disappointed with the education system right now. With all these tests, we don't have time to teach. It is also very frustrating when we have to prove our abilities with countless hours to show that we are highly qualified. In no other profession are there such lofty goals for their employees with such little benefit. I truly feel that the time and effort I put into teaching is not worth my while. No Child Left Behind is wonderful in theory, but impossible to carry out. Not every child is equal in ability, and no teacher should be expected to make it so."

The number of teachers leaving the profession is exceeding the number of teachers entering the profession by 23 percent. With over 25 percent of our teaching force eligible to retire within the next 10 years, this young educator's thoughts should be a warning. Teachers that have been career educators are bailing out as soon as they can because they do not want to deal with the unnecessary red tape and the growing pressures that are being placed upon them.

Another staggering fact is that one-third of new teachers quit the education profession within the first 3 years of teaching. In my rural Kansas district, if we have to shut the doors on rural schools it will not be because of lack of students, it will be because we cannot find the teachers to fill the teaching vacancies.

Congress must be sensitive to the responsibility we hold in making educators want to walk out of the classroom and never look back. Congress needs to look closely at our role and the trends and make sure that we are not encouraging this situation by continuing to overregulate the classroom.