

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

AN ESSAY ON THE AIR FORCE NATIONAL SECURITY FORUM AND THE AMERICAN ARMED FORCES

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, recently, Mr. Brian L. Cornelius, a resident of Higginsville, MO, submitted an outstanding op-ed for the Higginsville Advance newspaper. The words composed by Mr. Cornelius are very meaningful and well written, and I wish to share them with all Members of the House of Representatives.

NOW MORE THAN EVER PRAYERS BETTER THAN PROTESTS

(By Brian L. Cornelius)

In May of 2002, I had the distinct privilege of attending the 49th Annual National Security Forum (NSF) at Maxwell Air Force Base in Montgomery, Alabama. I attended this event on the nomination and request of Congressman Ike Skelton. The National Security Forum is held in conjunction with the Air War College of the Air Force and includes members of every branch of the U.S. Military.

As background, the primary purpose of the forum is a frank and candid exchange of views on national security matters among invited civilian guests, Air War College students, and senior military and civilian leaders. Over 130 civilian guests from the fields of business, education, government, law, media and medicine attended the National Security Forum.

The tragedies surrounding the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks were still fresh in my mind when the 2002 National Security Forum commenced eight months later. I was in New York City ten days before the terrorist attacks of September 11th occurred. I stood and looked with awe at the World Trade Center. Our hotel was less than three blocks from the twin towers, and was later closed due to the damage it sustained when the towers collapsed.

The format of the NSF places all attendees in seminar groups with Air War College students (those in the military). Each day, all the seminar groups attend a morning and afternoon lecture together and then break out into their respective seminar groups to discuss the issues raised during the lecture. These lectures were presented by several people from both military and civilian life. The presenters list included the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of the Air Force, the Middle East editor for a national magazine, a national network news Pentagon correspondent, and other very impressive people from the media, think tanks, and military personnel. I have seen several of the presenters on national news outlets such as NBC, CNN and Fox News in the months since attending the National Security Forum.

The National Security Forum operates on a "non-attribute" method to encourage an honest and robust dialogue on the issues discussed. Therefore, anything said by anyone attending the Forum cannot be directly attributed to that person without the person's

consent. The only other request of civilian attendees to the National Security Forum is that we share what we learned with our local communities.

With the above background, I would like to share with my community a bit of what I learned while attending the National Security Forum last May. It is particularly relevant while the war with Iraq is on going.

I went into the National Security Forum with a bit of skepticism and a healthy dose of intimidation. While my father was a veteran of World War II, I knew little of military protocol, and I wondered why the military would want the opinion of a common guy from Lafayette County. I was also a little bummed that I had to travel on Memorial Day and be away from my family. I was intimidated by the thought of staying on a military base for several days, especially after the events of the prior September.

Once the NSF began, and I entered the room where my seminar group met, my skepticism and intimidation turned into complete respect, and the deepest feeling of privilege and honor I have experienced. The military members of my seminar group caused this metamorphosis.

While the vast majority of Air War College students are officers in the United States Air Force, all other branches of service are also represented. Officers from foreign militaries also attend this year-long advanced training. I was told that it is more difficult for an officer to gain acceptance into the Air War College than it is for a Lieutenant Colonel to be promoted to full Colonel. Each and every military member of my seminar group was of the rank of Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel.

The military members of my seminar group were the most impressive people I have ever had the privilege to meet. While I wish I could tell you about all of these people serving our great country, I will confine this article to two representative samples.

Air Force Colonel Tony Hinen sat next to me for most of the week. While he has served in various capacities, I was most interested in his experience as a pilot of the huge tankers that refuel fighter jets and other planes during long missions. Colonel Hinen, a graduate of the Air Force Academy, is a dedicated Christian, husband and father. He has a keen insight into our world today, and was in training in Afghanistan when the September 11 terrorist attacks occurred.

Army Lieutenant Colonel Eddiy Daly sat across from me in our seminar group. An Airborne Ranger, Lt. Col. Daly made a combat jump in the Panama Canal campaign. Like local hero Stanton Thompson, Lt. Col. Daly received the Army's highest award for action taken in a non-combat or civilian situation. While piloting a plane for a civilian parachute jump club, Lt. Col. Daly climbed in and out of the plane, while flying it, to free the last jumper off the plane whose parachute gear had become hung up on the plane. After several attempts, Lt. Col. Daly finally cut the jumper free of the plane. The jumper safely parachuted to the ground and Lt. Col. Daly safely pulled himself back into the plane, by the pilot's seat belt, and landed the plane. Lt. Col. Daly is also a dedicated husband and father.

It was a very humbling experience for me to be in a room full of these very impressive men and women serving our country. Their grasp of our security issues was only equaled

by their desire to serve their country to the best of their abilities.

National Security Forum seminars included topics such as "Lessons Learned or Unlearned—Enduring Freedom and Beyond", "Middle East Challenges and the U.S. Security Policy", and "The Changing Security Environment and U.S. Military Strategy".

Of the daily seminars that all NSF attendees were required to attend, the environment in the Middle East was often a topic. The speakers on Middle East challenges were civilian experts from a national news organization and a research think tank. Many other speakers during the week also talked about the situation in the Middle East.

While I am not allowed to directly quote anyone, I distinctly remember that each and every presenter at the National Security Forum was certain that Iraq, and Saddam Hussein, possessed weapons of mass destruction. Most, if not all, of these experts also felt that it was not a matter of "if", but "when" these weapons would be used.

Various positions and arguments were made for what the United States should do, if anything, in regards to Iraq. One speaker eloquently pointed out that the world is in a place that it has not been in since the Roman Empire. One country dominates the world in military and economic might for the first time in centuries. With the end of the cold war and the dismantling of much of the old Soviet Union, our United States of America is the dominant military and economic power in the world.

The consensus during the NSF seemed to be that the United States would end up having to deal with Iraq, in one way or another. The only debate was whether we, as a nation, should deal with Iraq before a crisis situation arises or in response to a crisis situation. In other words, do we try to prevent a potential crisis by taking a preemptive action, or should we wait to see when and/or if a crisis event occurs to react?

I went into the National Security Forum as a "hawk". That is, I thought it to be the responsibility of the United States to use its economic and military assets to right the wrongs committed across the globe and to work to protect all people from tyrants, terrorists, and corrupt regimes. If not us, I thought, then who? I supported President Clinton's military decisions on Bosnia and Somalia, just as I supported former President Bush's decision on the Gulf War.

After attending the National Security Forum, I believe I am still a "hawk". However, now that I personally know members of our military who very well could come directly into harm's way, I am less hawkish than before. I watch the reports on the war in Iraq with a much deeper anguish and a much greater appreciation for our military personnel. These men and women are regular folks like you and me, who have to perform extraordinary duties, under extreme circumstances, because it is their duty.

I am certain that it has been that way throughout history. Whether it be my dad, Walter Cornelius, who was a bombardier on a B-29 in the Pacific Theater, or my uncle Bud Bramblett who served in the infantry in the Korean War, or Gary Evans who served in a combat outfit in Vietnam, or Darrell Jeffries who is a veteran of the Gulf War, or Stanton

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

Thompson who has served through several conflicts and crises, or a host of others I do not know or have the room to remember here, the members of the United States Armed Forces are just regular people who in normal everyday life are mothers, fathers, neighbors, friends, businessmen, teachers, or just plain old folks like me.

These ordinary folks are called upon to do extraordinary duties during a time of war or crisis. They are not allowed the luxury of protesting a war. In fact, they are called upon to put their very life on the line in order to protect the right of the protester or to bring that right to the oppressed.

Attending the National Security Forum was a very humbling and very rewarding experience. If I learned anything while there, I learned that those serving in our military are an extremely impressive group of people. They do not take their duty lightly and they are very aware of all the costs of war and conflict. I also learned that our elected and military leaders know a lot more about our world and the perils we face than I do.

Wars have probably always been debated. While I believe the United States has a responsibility to the global community, I am not absolutely sure of what that responsibility should be. However, I trust our leaders to make the correct decisions based upon the evidence they face. I realize that I know little about world affairs or the evidence that brings our leaders to a decision to take military action. Only as our present circumstance with Iraq becomes history will we know the outcome. While I hope that history will show that the outcome was very positive, I cannot know that to be the case today.

This, however, I do know: I am certain that once a military action ensues, our leaders and the men and women of our military deserve our prayers, not our protests. There will always be time to debate the war. Now, however, more than ever, our leaders and especially those serving in the military deserve our prayers. But for the extraordinary circumstance they have been put into, these great Americans who are serving our country in the combat zone are just regular folks like us. They need us to lift them up in our thoughts and our prayers. In my opinion, through their personal sacrifice and service, these servants have earned it and they deserve it.

TRIBUTE TO AMERICAN LEGION
AUXILIARY UNIT NO. 44 OF MAR-
QUETTE, MI, RECOGNIZING THE
SUCCESS OF THEIR POPPY SALE
FUNDRAISING

HON. BART STUPAK

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize a group in my district whose volunteers put in hundreds of hours every year to raise money for local veterans while encouraging public remembrance of veterans on Memorial Day.

The Richard M. Jopling American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 44 of Marquette recently donated \$3,500 in proceeds from its annual poppy sale to the D.J. Jacobetti Veterans Home in Marquette. This money—a truly remarkable sum—will let the Jacobetti Home purchase two portable WelchAllyn machines, used to monitor a patient's vital signs and provide an extra margin of safety for patients needing that support.

There could be no better time than the present, when the welfare of all our veterans and military personnel are in the minds of every American, to recognize the contributions of the Marquette American Legion Auxiliary No. 44. In these times of tight budgets, the efforts of these sterling volunteer service organizations are also critical to meeting the needs of our nation's veterans.

The sight of the Auxiliary's red crepe-paper poppies signals the arrival of spring in Marquette and also reminds the public of the sacrifices our veterans have made to protect our freedom.

Mr. Speaker, American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 44 of Marquette also sponsors birthday parties for residents of the Jacobetti Home every month of the year.

In addition to the poppy sales and the birthday parties, the Auxiliary supplies gifts for the Jacobetti Home Christmas "Gift Shop" and sponsors a ladies friendship group at the veteran's facility.

Mr. Speaker, the world is a better place thanks to groups like American Legion Auxiliary Unit No. 44 of Marquette. I ask you and our colleagues to join me in recognizing and applauding their efforts.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MAINE
SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL CONSTITU-
TION TEAM

HON. JANICE D. SCHAKOWSKY

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, 24 exceptional students from the 9th Congressional District are ready to compete against the smartest and the brightest from around the country in the National finals of the We the People...The Citizen and the Constitution. The 24 students, all seniors from Maine South High School in Park Ridge, IL, have recently won the Illinois State competition and will represent our great State in the national finals.

What does it take to make it into the finals of this prestigious contest? What does it take to make it this far? The answer is clear: Dedication, hard work, and countless hours reading, researching, and studying the great document that is the foundation of our democracy: the Constitution of the United States of America—the symbol of personal freedom and protection.

Each year, the "We the People" foundation hosts district, state and national level congressional-style hearings on the history and principles of Constitutional democracy in the United States. Participants are tested on their knowledge of the Constitution and its foundations and applications to our country.

The "We the People" contest is an invaluable learning experience for Maine South high school students and other students from around the country. The program helps promote democracy and encourages civic participation in the issues of critical importance to our freedoms by young men and women and I am hopeful they will carry those lessons with them into the future.

I would like to commend the students of Maine South High School's Constitution Team and their academic advisor Dan States for their hard work and great scholastic achieve-

ment, and I wish them the best of luck in the National Finals.

TRIBUTE TO THE CITY OF PLEASANT
RIDGE, MICHIGAN ON THEIR
75TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. SANDER M. LEVIN

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my congratulations to the City of Pleasant Ridge, its residents and its elected leadership, on the anniversary of the city's 75th year of incorporation.

The City of Pleasant Ridge is a beautiful bedroom community located, just north of the City of Detroit, in south Oakland County. With tree-lined streets, warmly cared for yards, and historic brick homes, the City of Pleasant Ridge is truly a "jewel" in the metropolitan area.

This settlement began in 1913 when Burt Taylor subdivided the Mayday farm. The settlement was incorporated as a village in 1921 and as a city in 1927. This city is now home to over 2,500 individuals and 1,000 families.

The City of Pleasant Ridge has a sense of community that can be seen at the bustling community center where they hold a variety of community events and classes, through the numerous community organizations and wide-ranging activities like the garden tours, auctions, scholarship grants to graduating high school students, active participation in the Woodward Avenue Dream Cruise and so many other wonderful community-wide activities.

The city has also had an impact beyond its borders in the Michigan community. Ashton Berst, an early City Administrator, was one of a dozen local government officials instrumental in forming the Michigan Municipal League. Pleasant Ridge is also the hometown of a former Member of Congress, and Governor of the State of Michigan, James Blanchard.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in sending every good wish to the City of Pleasant Ridge on their 75th anniversary. Indeed, they have much to be proud of. My heartiest congratulations to the residents, the community activists, and all of the members of the city administration. I look forward to many more years of working together, and being part of the fabric of this important community.

HONORING TERI JACKSON FOR
HER 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO
THE GRAND PRAIRIE CITY COUNCIL

HON. MARTIN FROST

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 10, 2003

Mr. FROST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Teri Jackson of Grand Prairie. Teri has exemplified the finest qualities of leadership and service and today I wish to honor her for her 17 year commitment to the City Council and the citizens of Grand Prairie.

A life long resident of Grand Prairie, Teri began her service on the City Council in the