

the health of American families. Preserve the gift and the miracle of American medicine, and pass this very necessary liability reform.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair must remind all Members not to make adjurations to the other body.

GUARD AND RESERVISTS TREATED AS THIRD-CLASS CITIZENS

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

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks, I will be entering into the RECORD an article entitled, "Sick, wounded U.S. troops held in squalor." This is a story that comes out of UPI. The author is Mark Benjamin, who is a UPI investigator editor, and he reports that 1 month after President Bush greeted the soldiers at Fort Stewart, the home of the famed Third Infantry Division, as heroes on their return from Iraq, approximately 600 sick or injured members of the Army Reserve and National Guard are warehoused in rows of spare, steamy, and dark cement barracks in a sandy field, waiting for doctors to treat their wounds or illnesses.

Now, these National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers' living conditions are so substandard and the medical care so poor that many of them believe the Army is trying to push them out with reduced benefits for their ailments. One document showed to this reporter stated that no more doctor appointments are available from October 14 through November 11. These Reserve and National Guard people are on what are called medical hold. If you are wounded and you are badly injured, you are in the hospital. But after you get to a certain point, they can do it on an outpatient basis. So you are put into a medical hold status.

As one member of the Guard said, there are two armies, one is the regular army and the other is the reserve army, and we are second class citizens. We are being ignored. Now, Mr. Speaker, 40 percent of the people now on medical hold are people who served in Iraq. Those who went described clusters of strange ailments, like heart and lung problems, among previously healthy troops. They said the Army has tried to refuse them benefits and claims the injuries and illnesses were due to preexisting conditions prior to military service.

One particular case caught my eye. First Sergeant Gerry Mosley. He crossed into Iraq from Kuwait on March 19 with the 296th Transportation Company, hauling fuel while under fire from the Iraqis as they traveled north alongside combat vehicles. Mosley said he was healthy before the war. He

could run 2 miles in 17 minutes. Pretty good. Those are 8½ minute miles, at 48 years of age. He also developed a series of symptoms: lung problems; shortness of breath; vertigo, that means he was dizzy; migraines; and tinnitus, that is ringing in his ears; and he thinks maybe the anthrax vaccine had something to do with it. He also has a torn shoulder from an injury there.

Mosely said he has never been depressed before, but he found himself looking at shotguns recently and thinking about suicide. Sergeant Mosely is paying \$300 a month to get better housing than the cinder block barracks. He has a notice from the base that appears to show that there are no more doctor appointments available for Reservists from October 14 to November 11. He said he had never been treated like this in 30 years in the Army Reserves and his quote was, "Now I won't go back to war for the Army."

Mr. Speaker, it is shameful that this kind of article appears in the newspapers in the United States at a time when we are sending people over to a war for very unclear reasons. No one really knows why they are over there. We have called up Reservists for months on end. What started out as 6 months has now been extended to a year.

I recently spoke at the retirement of one my Reservists in the State of Washington up at Everett at the naval base. Before I went up to speak about him, I asked him about their deployment. He told me all about it. And I asked if everybody came back to their job. He said 25 percent of the people in his unit came back to no job. They lost their job while they were gone.

This is an unacceptable situation. Those people who voted and said they care about the troops ought to be asking some very tough questions of the Army.

Mr. Speaker, the article I referred to above is as follows:

[From United Press International, Oct. 17, 2003]

SICK, WOUNDED U.S. TROOPS HELD IN
SQUALOR

(By Mark Benjamin)

FORT STEWART, GA., Oct. 17 (UPI).—Hundreds of sick and wounded U.S. soldiers including many who served in the Iraq war are languishing in hot cement barracks here while they wait—sometimes for months—to see doctors.

The National Guard and Army Reserve soldiers' living conditions are so substandard, and the medical care so poor, that many of them believe the Army is trying to push them out with reduced benefits for their ailments. One document shown to UPI states that no more doctor appointments are available from Oct. 14 through Nov. 11—Veterans Day. "I have loved the Army. I have served the Army faithfully and I have done everything the Army has asked me to do," said Sgt. 1st Class Willie Buckels, a truck master with the 296th Transportation Company. Buckels served in the Army Reserves for 27 years, including Operation Iraqi Freedom and the first Gulf War. "Now my whole idea about the U.S. Army has changed. I am treated like a third-class citizen."

Since getting back from Iraq in May, Buckels, 52, has been trying to get doctors to find out why he has intense pain in the side of his abdomen since doubling over in pain there.

After waiting since May for a diagnosis, Buckels has accepted 20 percent of his benefits for bad knees and is going home to his family in Mississippi. "They have not found out what my side is doing yet, but they are still trying," Buckels said.

One month after President Bush greeted soldiers at Fort Stewart—home of the famed Third Infantry Division—as heroes on their return from Iraq, approximately 600 sick or injured members of the Army Reserves and National Guard are warehoused in rows of spare, steamy and dark cement barracks in a sandy field, waiting for doctors to treat their wounds or illnesses.

The Reserve and National Guard soldiers are on what the Army calls "medical hold," while the Army decides how sick or disabled they are and what benefits—if any—they should get as a result.

Some of the soldiers said they have waited six hours a day for an appointment without seeing a doctor. Others described waiting weeks or months without getting a diagnosis or proper treatment.

The soldiers said professional active duty personnel are getting better treatment while troops who serve in the National Guard or Army reserve are left to wallow in medical hold.

"It is not an Army of One. It is the Army of two—Army and Reserves," said one soldier who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, during which she developed a serious heart condition and strange skin ailment.

A half-dozen calls by UPI seeking comment from Fort Stewart public affairs officials and U.S. Forces Command in Atlanta were not returned.

Soldiers here estimate that nearly 40 percent of the personnel now in medical hold were deployed to Iraq. Of those who went, many described clusters of strange ailments, like heart and lung problems, among previously healthy troops. They said the Army has tried to refuse them benefits, claiming the injuries and illnesses were due to a "pre-existing condition," prior to military service.

Most soldiers in medical hold at Fort Stewart stay in rows of rectangular, gray, single-story cinder block barracks without bathrooms or air conditioning. They are dark and sweltering in the southern Georgia heat and humidity. Around 60 soldiers cram in the bunk beds in each barrack.

Soldiers make their way by walking or using crutches through the sandy dirt to a communal bathroom, where they have propped office partitions between otherwise open toilets for privacy. A row of leaky sinks sits on an opposite wall. The latrine smells of urine and is full of bugs, because many windows have no screens. Showering is in a communal, cinder block room. Soldiers say they have to buy their own toilet paper.

They said the conditions are fine for training, but not for sick people.

"I think it is disgusting," said one Army Reserve member who went to Iraq and asked that his name not be used.

That soldier said that after being deployed in March he suffered onset of neurological symptoms in Baghdad that has gotten steadily worse. He shakes uncontrollably.

He said the Army has told him he has Parkinson's Disease and it was a pre-existing condition, but he thinks it was something in the anthrax shots the Army gave him.

"They say I have Parkinson's but it is developing too rapidly," he said. "I did not have a problem until I got those shots."

First Sgt. Gerry Mosley crossed into Iraq from Kuwait on March 19 with the 296th

Transportation Company, hauling fuel while under fire from the Iraqis as they traveled north alongside combat vehicles. Mosley said he was healthy before the war; he could run two miles in 17 minutes at 48 years old.

But he developed a series of symptoms: lung problems and shortness of breath; vertigo; migraines; and tinnitus. He also thinks the anthrax vaccine may have hurt him. Mosley also has a torn shoulder from an injury there.

Mosley says he has never been depressed before, but found himself looking at shotguns recently and thought about suicide.

Mosley is paying \$300 a month to get better housing than the cinder block barracks. He has a notice from the base that appears to show that no more doctor appointments are available for reservists from Oct. 14 until Nov. 11. He said he has never been treated like this in his 30 years in the Army Reserves.

"Now, I would not go back to war for the Army," Mosley said.

Many soldiers in the hot barracks said regular Army soldiers get to see doctors, while National Guard and Army Reserve troops wait.

"The active duty guys that are coming in, they get treated first and they put us on hold," said another soldier who returned from Iraq six weeks ago with a serious back injury. He has gotten to see a doctor only two times since he got back, he said.

Another Army Reservist with the 149th Infantry Battalion said he has had real trouble seeing doctors about his crushed foot he suffered in Iraq. "There are not enough doctors. They are overcrowded and they can't perform the surgeries that have to be done," that soldier said. "Look at these mattresses. It hurts just to sit on them," he said, gesturing to the bunks. "There are people here who got back in April but did not get their surgeries until July. It is putting a lot on these families."

The Pentagon is reportedly drawing up plans to call up more reserves.

In an Oct. 9 speech to National Guard and reserve troops in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Bush said the soldiers had become part of the backbone of the military.

"Citizen-soldiers are serving in every front on the war on terror," Bush said. "And you're making your state and your country proud."

LET IRAQ TAKE CARE OF IRAQ

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

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, many Americans today may not be familiar with Will Rogers. However, Will Rogers was at one time considered by many to be the most popular man in America. He once said, "America has a great habit of always talking about protecting American interests in some foreign country." Then he said, "Protect them here at home. There is more American interest right here than anywhere."

The passage of an additional \$87 billion for an operation in Iraq seems to many to be anything but fiscally conservative. The request includes, among many other things, \$5.7 billion for a new electric power system; \$3.7 billion to improve drinking water; \$856 million to upgrade and repair three airports, rail lines, and phone service; \$240,000

each for 1,500 police trainers to train Iraqi police; \$1.71 per gallon for gas that they are then selling to Iraqi citizens for \$4.15 per gallon, according to *The New York Times*.

Earlier billions have been used to build or rebuild thousands of Iraqi schools, give free health care to many Iraqi citizens, make backpayments to the Iraqi military and Iraqi retirees, and even send 60,000 soccer balls there. Our Founding Fathers could not have imagined all this in their wildest dreams.

A distinguished Member of the other body, the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. VOINOVICH, said, "Look at the needs we have here at home, with our roads, sewers, and water projects. It is hard to tell people there isn't money for sewers and water and then send that kind of money to Iraq." Another distinguished Member of the other body, Mr. HAGEL, the gentleman from Nebraska, said, "There is a great unease about all this reflected across this land. We are getting deeper and deeper into something we have never been in before in this part of the world. This is complicated, dangerous and uncertain."

Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, have never believed in massive foreign aid, yet our occupation of Iraq has become the largest foreign aid program in the history of the world. Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, have never believed in huge deficit spending, yet we are now told that our deficits for just this year and next will reach close to an astounding \$1 trillion.

Supporters of the war scoffed at the predictions that we would spend between \$200 billion to \$300 billion in Iraq over the next 10 years. Now, by the most conservative efforts, not counting many things that should be counted, the Iraqi operation will cost \$167 billion in just the first 2 years.

□ 2030

And because we are in such a deep fiscal hole already, we will have to borrow all these billions we are spending there.

Conservatives have never believed in world government, and have been strong critics of the U.N. Yet, some prominent war supporters, while criticizing the U.N. in one breath, will say in the next we had to go to war to enforce all the U.N. resolutions Saddam Hussein had violated. Most conservatives surely do not believe it is fair to place almost the entire burden of enforcing U.N. resolutions on American taxpayers and the U.S. military. Most conservatives, while believing strongly in national defense, have never believed the U.S. should be the policeman of the world. Most conservatives believe we would not have nearly as many enemies around the world if we followed a noninterventionist foreign policy and did not get involved in so many religious, ethnic, and political disputes around the world.

Now, we are following a so-called neoconservative foreign policy that is

anything but conservative. This interventionist policy is breeding resentment, creating more enemies, and putting our children and grandchildren into a financial black hole, and worst of all killing many young American military.

Fortune magazine in its November 25 issue, long before the war started, printed an article entitled, "Iraq—We Win, What Then?" The article said a "military victory could turn into a strategic defeat," and an American occupation could turn U.S. troops into sitting ducks for Islamic terrorists. These predictions have turned out to be deadly accurate.

The columnist Georgie Ann Geyer wrote, "Critics of the war against Iraq have said since the beginning of the conflict that Americans, still strangely complacent about overseas wars being waged by a minority in their name, will inevitably come to a point where they will see they have to have a government that provides services at home or one that seeks empire across the globe."

Saddam Hussein was an evil man but he had a military budget only about two-tenths of 1 percent of ours and was never any real threat to us. Everyone knew we would win the war quickly and easily.

Winning the peace, everyone said, would be much more difficult. Now, we are hearing noble-sounding clichés like "we have to get the job done" and "we must stay the course" and "the American people must be willing to sacrifice." Well, we should all be asking why?

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Iraqi people do not want us running their country, they only want our money. Any country would want all these billions. Now war supporters seem to be criticizing the media for reporting all the killing but failing to emphasize all the good that is going on there. For all of the billions we are spending there, I certainly hope some good things are going on, but these good things should be paid for by the Iraqi citizens with their own oil wealth. Let us leave Iraq to the Iraqis.

A very small minority of very powerful Neo-Cons have apparently dreamed of war with Iraq for many years. They got their wish. But what they may have thought would be their crowning achievement may instead lead to their downfall.

So many people in the United States and around the world feel that they were misled about the need to go to war in Iraq that they almost certainly will be much harder to convince the next time around.

No matter who is President, almost all the leaders of the Defense Department, the State Department, the National Security Council, and our intelligence agencies are going to advocate more and more involvement in foreign affairs, even those which should be none of our business or even when there is no threat to our vital interests.

This is because all their power and glory, and most importantly, their funding are determined in large part by our involvement in the