

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER
TIME

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

TRIBUTE TO MR. WILLIE VAUGHN

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

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, growing up in a small rural town in extreme southeastern Arkansas presented for me and many of my peers many challenges, memorable moments, and interesting personalities. On April 20 of this year, one of those personalities, Mr. Willie Vaughn, reached a milestone in his life.

Mr. Vaughn became 100 years old. He is still alive, still active, still sharp-minded, goes to church, participates in activities. So I take this opportunity to congratulate him for not only living this long, but for the many things he was able to provide leadership to and that he accomplished during his lifetime.

Mr. Willie Vaughn was actually my uncle. We always called him Uncle Dude. He is technically my mother's stepbrother. However, they never acted as though they were anything except brothers and sisters who were integral parts of a large family group. In addition, he and my father had always been close friends and church associates. Therefore, our families were always very close and exhibited great feelings of kinship, friendship, and fellowship.

Uncle Dude was always a leader, at work, at church, in community activities, in family matters, in life. Like practically all of the other blacks in our town, he had very little formal education, but has always been one of the smartest men that I have ever known. He was a farmer, a sharecropper, but he was also a tailor and could make you a suit of clothes. He could cut your hair, make molasses and syrup, buy and rent real estate, and drove the school bus once we got one.

Uncle Dude was probably best known as a church leader, negotiator, and mentor. He kept the Penny's Chapel CMA church on the map, and was a constant visitor to other churches throughout the region. He was the epitome of excellence and no job was too small or too large. He had a motto that if a task was once begun, never leave until it was done. Be the job great or small, do it well or not at all.

He did everything at church there was to do. He could sing. He was chairman of the trustee board, Sunday school superintendent and teacher, fund-raiser, program planner, and

would clean up, cut the grass, and do everything else that was required.

□ 1800

Uncle Dude was, and still is, a tremendous family man, a patriarch. My Aunt L.C. and all of my cousins always knew that Uncle Dude was a man who they could depend upon and count on and be proud of his leadership, personal support, and well-being for his family.

He was a strong proponent of formal education and created many opportunities for me and others like me to learn. Uncle Dude, Brother Willie, Mr. Vaughn, he was called many things by many different people, but always with respect. He has been a giant, a legend, a mentor, a man among men. He learned to walk with kings and queens but never lost the common touch. All people matter with him; but none too much. I am proud to be in this man's family and proud to wish him a happy birthday as he reached the ripe age of 100.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I was unable to cast votes due to being out of town on important business. And if I had been present for roll call votes for the following bills, 134, on motion to suspend the rules and pass to designate the United States courthouse located at 400 North Miami Avenue in Miami, Florida, as the Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr., United States Courthouse; 135, on motion to suspend the rules and pass Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2004, Part II, I would have voted "yes" to all of these bills.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LOFGREN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. LOFGREN addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE IRAQ THEATER OF WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from California (Mr. HUNTER) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity with a number of colleagues on the Committee on Armed Services to discuss the subject on which America is most closely focused right now because we have troops in combat and that is the Iraq theater of war and the progress that has been made and the portent for the future.

We all recall when our great servicemen, the 1st Marine Division, the 101st Airborne, the 3rd Army Division, and the many other supporting elements in the Navy and the Marine Corps and the Army and the Air Force and the U.S. Coast Guard made that lightning drive for Baghdad and doing something that most of the critics felt they could not do, drove past choke points, bridges, oil fields, and other places that we thought the enemy would blow or disrupt; but the movement was so quick and so well coordinated that, in fact, we seized most of those difficult areas before the enemy could take advantage of their capability to blow them or to make them impassable for our soldiers.

So we drove up right through the center of Iraq, up through the heart of

Iraq; and we took Baghdad and we started the second chapter of this centerpiece of the war on terrorism and that is to turn Iraq into a nation that has a benign intent with respect to the United States, that is not an enemy of the United States, and, in fact, can be counted on to be a friend and in that very, very difficult part of the world lying between Syria and Iran, can be a force for good and an ally of the United States. It is a very important aspect of our war against terrorism.

Now we have started the second chapter, and it is a tough chapter. We have troops engaged in combat right now in areas like Fallujah. We have the United States Marines in firefights, as we speak, trying to knock out the resistance to those who do not want to see democracy.

And I think for those who looked at this June 30 hand-over of initial sovereignty, taking it away from the United States and handing it over, starting that turn-over of political power, most of us anticipated that there would be an up-swell in violence. There has been an up-swell in violence.

And the Marines right now are fighting tenaciously. And we see with our embedded reporters and our real time television in the city of Fallujah and other areas, difficult areas, we see clerics like al Sadr taking advantage of the occupation in an attempt to foment anti-Americanism and strikes against our troops. We see still the remnants of Saddam Hussein's regime, those people who had it so good in the days of the palaces who want to get back into power.

And we have a message for the United States that, I think, is derived against that background. That message is hold firm. Stay steady, because we are making steady progress.

And there are people in Iraq who want to be part of this new government. We have hundreds of little community governments that have been started up, interestingly, by our military leaders, by these great wonderful military leaders who are skilled in leadership, who know how to bring people together, who know how to engineer teamwork. And they stood up city councils and what I would call county governments across Iraq.

And those people are working on getting those sewage systems hooked up, getting that electricity hooked up, getting that water supply to the neighborhood that does not have it.

And we are also doing great things for the children of Iraq. We are now at a record level of school attendance. We are doing everything we can to make sure that Iraqi children are able to go to school, get an education. We have stood up hospitals. We have allowed a religious freedom that is unprecedented in modern times where people can go to the areas that were forbidden by Saddam Hussein. We are hooking up electrical capability and turning on that great resource for the Iraqi people, and that is the oil fields.

Now we have had a major, major redeployment of American troops, one of the biggest in history. And in that redeployment we moved the 1st Infantry Division up to that very difficult area of operations, up to the area of Baghdad where the 4th Infantry Division was in place. The 4th Infantry Division is now rotated out. We have moved many elements from the 1st Marine Division into the area of operations to Fallujah and points west where the 82nd Airborne was in place and where the 1st Armored Division was in place. In Baghdad we have moved now the 1st Cavalry Division. And we have kept most of the 1st Armored Division in place which, I think, in light of this up-swell in violence, is a very, very prudent decision by Secretary of Defense Don Rumsfeld and the President of the United States.

So stay steady should be the order of the day. And we are doing that. And our troops are doing a wonderful job for us. We know we have got a ton of National Guard and Reservists in place. And they are doing a wonderful job for us. And when we finish in Iraq, we cannot guarantee that the Iraqi people will have freedom forever, we cannot expect them to turn into Republicans and Democrats. But what we can expect is to have a nation that has a benign intent toward the United States, that is has a good relationship toward the United States and refuses to be a jumping off point for terrorism and a point for unrest and disruption in that part of the world.

And I still in my mind's eye, I know it was a long time ago and images move off that TV screen quickly, but I remember the pictures of the dead Kurdish mothers holding their babies, killed in mid-stride where that poison gas hit them. I remember those images.

I remember the images of the mass graves that they have uncovered, many more to be uncovered where people are just now discovering what happened to their father or their brother.

I remember the story from the farmer who said that every day bus loads of people would be brought up to his farm and that backhoes that had dug the trenches the day before would be standing by with new trenches dug, and the firing squad that worked bankers hours, 9 to 5, would appear; and they would move people out of the buses from grandmothers right down to little children, move them up to the edge of the trenches, and they would each receive one bullet in the back of the head, and then they would be bulldozed into the trenches.

He recounted one day where the firing squad ran out of ammunition so they just bulldozed them into the trenches alive. That is the story of what happened before in Iraq.

And so for people who ask their mothers and fathers when they look through history and see terrible things in that land, they say why did we not as Americans do anything about it, they can, with respect to Iraq, say America did something about it.

Right now we are in a difficult time. Our troops are in battle. Now we should stay firm. We should stay steady.

Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to yield to my colleague, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE), who had a great career in the United States Marines, who does a great service on the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. KLINE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for yielding. I thank him for his leadership on the Committee on Armed Services and everything he is doing to take care of our men and women who are leading in this war on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to talk about the heroes, not in the large sense, but in the individual sense, the heroes that we have in this war, fighting in this war in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And, specifically, I would like to share the story today of just one of the many committed Marines. And I know that the gentleman's son is in the Marines, and we share some common bond here; but one of the Marines that is serving today in Iraq has an incredible story.

I was talking to the commandant of the Marines this week. He was in an airplane, I think he said at 48,000 feet. It is amazing how we fly these airplanes these days. He was telling me the story of Sergeant Christopher Chandler. I wanted to share that today because it is a story of resolve, determination, love of country, and love of the American people. It is an example that we see in other men and women in uniform, but this one is particularly special.

I have got some notes here to make sure I get the dates and times right. In November of 2001, Sergeant Christopher Chandler answered the call to service in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Less than one month into this assignment, Sergeant Chandler stepped on a land mine while providing security for an explosive ordnance disposal unit in Kandahar, Afghanistan; and he lost a leg.

Sergeant Chandler was one of the first service members injured in the global war on terrorism after the attacks on 9/11 and the first American to be awarded the Purple Heart in Operation Enduring Freedom. Despite the severity of his injury, he refused to let the incident diminish his resolve.

Following the incident, Sergeant Chandler was evacuated to Walter Reed Army Medical Center where he received treatment and was outfitted with a prosthetic leg.

Neither his injury nor the immediate danger he experienced were able to stifle the determined spirit of Sergeant Chandler. Upon completion of physical therapy, he re-enlisted in the Marine Corps and requested a seat in the U.S. Army jump school.

His request was met, as I am sure you can imagine, with some resistance. He was informed that no exceptions could be made for any physical limitations. He would be required to complete every

task and fulfill each training requirement at the same level of excellence as everyone else attending that jump school.

He accepted the challenge. He excelled. He was able to demonstrate to the physical evaluation review board that he was fit to return to full active duty without limitations. He became the first amputee to complete Army jump school.

The story is not over. In December of 2003, Sergeant Chandler graduated, exceeding all expectations by being selected the noncommissioned officer honor graduate of his class.

Today Sergeant Chandler is serving our Nation bravely as a member of the 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance in Iraq.

It has been said that the truest test of a man's character is not what he does with success, but what he makes of defeat. For generations, the Marine Corps has trained recruits with this type of determination and instilled the courage in its men and women to move forward when those around them have faltered. Sergeant Chandler is a leader, but he is not the only one.

Thousands of terrific men and women have answered the call to serve because they know how important this service is to the security of America and to a stable world. And these brave men and women deserve to know that they have our unconditional love and support.

□ 1815

In those discussions with the Commandant of the Marine Corps, as I mentioned earlier, and he has just returned from Iraq only just a couple of weeks ago, he shared with me the single most asked question about the families of the American and women serving at every level and by the men and women themselves in the Marine Corps. And the question is, Do we still have the backing of the American people?

He answers unequivocally yes. We need to make certain that stays so. These men and women who face danger each day on our behalf see and hear the same newscasts that we do. We cannot allow the morale of our troops to be diminished by these negative reports.

Mr. Chairman, you are absolutely right. We have to stay the course. We have a responsibility to make our support known, our emotional, financial, all levels of support to every man and woman who serves this Nation. We owe them no less. We cannot show any weakening of resolve.

It is a commitment that we have to Sergeant Chandler and to all the Marines and soldiers serving over there.

I know, Mr. Chairman, you are giving them your unqualified support and I pledge mine, and I ask my colleagues and the American people to do the same.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his very eloquent remarks. I am reminded that we have a lot of folks fighting the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and in other

parts of the world. We are equally grateful to them. I thank him for the experience he brings to the committee and his good judgment.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my great colleague, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) for any remarks he would like to make.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman very much for his leadership of the Committee on Armed Services. It has certainly been a pleasure to serve with him.

Mr. Chairman, I was in Iraq in November, and there is no question what I saw. Iraq is a war zone in some places. We saw that when we were on the ground. We saw the fact that there are challenges and obstacles that face us. The gut wrenching scenes that we have seen on our TV are without doubt something that all Americans find very difficult to endure. But we have also, Mr. Chairman, seen what we are fighting.

I was in the Abu Ghraib prison. I stood in the execution chamber where 80,000 Iraqis were hung. It is a life altering experience to have been in a place where so many people were so barbarically killed.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would yield on that one point, I remember one story in the Post and I believe it was fairly well-documented about a high school class in Baghdad where the high schoolers, several of them wrote anti-Saddam Hussein remarks on the blackboard. They disappeared, and their families discovered after some years they had been hung. So high schoolers were taken out and hung for making anti-Saddam remarks.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, that story was in the Washington Post just after I returned from Iraq. It was about 40 or 45 young high school students. We all do crazy things when we are young, but graffiti should not be a reason that one gets executed. But we saw that when we were in Iraq.

What most Americans are not seeing, which you so correctly note, is the reconstruction that is taking place, the fact that electricity is now at pre-war levels and is evenly distributed through the country, the fact that water systems are coming back online, the fact that there is adequate food in the country, that there is gasoline, that there is traffic on the streets, that the major oil refineries are working, that oil is at pre-war export level.

Mr. Chairman, this is significant success in a short period of time. And yes, we need to get the security situation under control. Our soldiers are doing a terrific job in some of the most trying and difficult circumstances. Over 700 of them have paid the ultimate sacrifice, and we must be forever thankful and supportive of their efforts. And I would like to, if I could just have another couple of moments, read from an e-mail of one of those soldiers because I

think it is certainly far more telling in his words than any of our words.

This is a soldier who is in the U.S. Army serving in the 16th Combat Engineer Battalion in Baghdad. I will not read the entire e-mail. I will read excerpts from it but it is very telling. "The news you are hearing stateside is awfully depressing and negative. The reality is we are accomplishing a tremendous amount here, and the Iraqi people are not only benefiting greatly but are enthusiastically supportive." He goes on to say, "I am not out of touch with the negative side of things. In fact, I think my unit has it harder than many other Army units in this whole operation. That said, despite some attacks, the overall picture is one of extreme success and much thanks. The various terrorist enemies we are facing in Iraq are really aiming at you back in the United States. This is a test of will for our country. We soldiers of yours are doing great and scoring victories in confronting the evil terrorists."

He concludes by saying, "Yes, there are terrorists who wish to strike these things down, but this is a test of will. We must win. We can do this as long as Americans at home keep faith with the soldiers in this war. We are Americans after all. We can and must win this test. That is all it is."

So, Mr. Chairman, let me conclude by saying that based on my experience of having been in Iraq and what we knew absolutely about Saddam Hussein, that he had started two wars, that he had territorial aspirations, that he had used weapons of mass destruction not only against the Iranians but against the Kurds, as you so aptly noted, that he was funding suicide bombers, and that over 300,000 people were killed and laid in mass graves. That is what we know.

Mr. Chairman, our world is a much safer world with Saddam Hussein in prison, not in power.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I might just ask the gentleman what his basic take was on the GIs that he met with while in Iraq?

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, there were six of us in this congressional delegation and all of us had the chance to meet with various members of the military from our own State. So I met with 12 or 13 New Hampshire soldiers. At that time their morale was extremely high. We knew that we were asking them to do a very tough and a very dangerous job and they knew it too. They missed their loved ones. There is no question about that. They would obviously prefer to be home and not in a far away land as they are. But they also said to a man that the reaction that they were getting from the Iraqi people was extremely positive.

They do not all love us there. That is clear. But the vast majority of Iraqi people are glad that we have liberated their country and they are glad for the

fact that these soldiers are helping rebuild schools, get hospitals on line, improve the water systems, all of the reconstruction projects that we are asking them to do, and the vast majority of the Iraqi people are glad that there is now an interim constitution and there is going to be a successful handover of power on June 30.

Certainly in talking to the New Hampshire soldiers, this is precisely what they told us and felt that if we stand behind their mission they will finish the job and they will finish it and have done a great job.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his trip, and I want to thank all the Members who have gone, Republican and Democrat. We have had a great majority of the members of the committee go to Iraq and spend a lot of time with the troops. We really appreciate that.

Incidentally, I would ask my colleagues, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES) and the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCHROCK), and the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER), I will ask the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) to talk to us a little bit next. But if anybody needs to leave early, we will make sure that they get a chance to speak before we go on.

I want to thank the gentleman for his great work on the Committee on Armed Services. It is a big commitment to go to Iraq and take that big block of time, and it is not easy, not convenient and under the rules and the tough aspects of flying into some of those areas now it is a little bit of an ordeal. I want to thank the gentleman for taking the effort and really caring about our troops.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. TURNER) for any remarks he would like to make.

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I first want to congratulate you on your comments that you have made about the importance of our troops having the necessary equipment and protective gear. You have been a leader, as has our President, in making certain that they have the resources necessary in order to protect themselves, and that of course was not without opposition.

There has been significant opposition in supporting our troops and our funding, and our President has stood fast and so have you in making sure that they have had the correct armor, the Humvees had the correct armor, and that we work diligently to bring those supplies and equipment to our troops.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to travel to Iraq with the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SAXTON) of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities under the gentleman's committee. We had the opportunity to go to Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, and Kuwait.

Throughout our trip there was not anyone that we met with in any one of

those countries who did not identify Iraq as part of the war on terror. They all reported that Saddam Hussein was a threat to the safety in the Middle East, safety to the United States and safety of the Western civilized world, and understood how important it was that the United States win this effort and stick to this effort of stabilizing Iraq and of the removal of Saddam Hussein.

Now, everyone has their stories of when they were in Iraq as to what they saw. One that touched me the most, I served as the former mayor for the City of Dayton and I had the opportunity to talk with some of the mayors that were emerging for some of the towns and cities in Iraq, and they were able to talk to us about the path to liberty. These were men who were absolutely committed to serving their communities, who had the challenges that every community does, in dealing with the areas of infrastructure and sanitary issues, sewer issues, their police, the safety of their people, but had a glint in their eye of the commitment, of the understanding of what was more important of what they were doing.

They were not mayors who were just concerned about the public services that a city provides, but they were concerned about the path to liberty, the support the United States was providing to them and their ability to stabilize their country.

Each of them was serving at a tremendous risk to themselves and their family, knowing that the idea that they were standing for, the beliefs that they were standing for, of liberty, was jeopardizing their life and the lives and the safety of their family.

Now, recently, I had someone ask me why did I think the conflict in Iraq was increasing currently. I think we all know that as we take a look at Iraq and its path to liberty that there are those that benefited from the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein. There are those who benefited from this brutal dictatorship and they do not want to see this path to liberty this country is taking. They would prefer to have a brutal dictatorship that delivers out power and benefits to the few instead of the country benefiting from the freedom of all.

I think the President's efforts in Iraq are best shown in the efforts that we have recently seen in Libya. We know that as a result of Iraq and the removal of Saddam Hussein, that Moammar Khadaffi has come forward and offered up his nuclear weapons program to the United States and other countries, indicating that he is abandoning his efforts of pursuing the weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the area of nuclear weapons and that he was much more advanced than what we had thought.

What we know is by pulling Saddam Hussein out of a spider hole, in Libya we have seen that Moammar Khadaffi and the Libyans have coughed up their nuclear weapons program again to the

greater safety of the world and to the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman's leadership on this issue and for continuing to focus on the issue of protecting our troops.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to thank the gentleman for his great service in the Committee on Armed Services and his expertise to the mark-ups we have had; also to his commitment to our people in uniform.

Let me ask the gentleman his ideas on the morale of our troops. I understand this is a tough and difficult time. What is your take?

Mr. TURNER of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, when I am asked this back at home about the issue of morale of our troops, I always tell everyone there are two components of morale. One is are you sure of your purpose? Two, do you want to come home?

Everyone I met with, of course, wanted to come home and had very compelling stories of the sacrifice they were making in being away from their families. But everyone was absolutely sure of their purpose, not just for the liberation of Iraq but for the absolute nexus of their work for their safety of the United States. They know they are on the front lines of the war on terror and the war on terrorism. They know the efforts they are doing is making America safer.

Every one of them when I asked about their commitment to being in Iraq, their desire to stay and finish the job, were absolutely committed to this, and from that I would say their morale was very high because they were doing what they love, which is defending our country and advancing the freedom and the safety of our country.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Let me ask the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. FORBES), who actually arrived first for this special order. I want to thank him for his special efforts and all the great service on the committee, and all the work he does for the people who wear the uniform for the United States. Please tell us about your experience in Iraq.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Chairman, first of all, we want to thank you for your diligent efforts on behalf of our men and women in uniform.

Mr. HUNTER. We are all working together.

Mr. FORBES. It is an important thing and we appreciate your leadership on this. I appreciate your conducting this special order tonight, because as you know so oftentimes the men and women fighting in Iraq never get their voices heard here. We hear a lot of negative voices and a lot of other things in the media, but they do not get to speak out unless we bring that message here.

□ 1830

Just a few nights ago I had an opportunity to speak to a large group of students, and they were in high school,

and they had all been high achievers and had great academic excellence, and as I walked in that big auditorium, I was looking at all the students. I could not help but think that we had men and women over in Iraq who were just a couple of years older than they were, and because of their courage and what they were doing, that those students were able to meet there that night in freedom and in safety because these men and women in uniform from this country have gone there and taken the fight to the terrorists so that we are fighting in Iraq instead of fighting over here in our streets and in our hallways over here.

Mr. Speaker, it just makes you proud to be a part of those young men and women.

Mr. HUNTER. On that point, too, I would say to my good friend from Virginia, one thing that I think Americans understand is that we now live in an age where we have to preempt, we have to go abroad, we have to go after the bad guys. That is what this President has done aggressively. He has gone after the bad guys. Up to that point we had had attacks on the Cole, we had attacks on embassies, we had terrorist acts around the world and we threw a few cruise missiles. We got a pharmacy knocked out, a pharmaceutical plant, and a relatively empty training ground in Afghanistan and two Chihuahuas and I do not think we hit the Chihuahuas under a previous administration, and I am being facetious. Actually, they were not effective enough to get Chihuahuas. So we had a very limited response to terrorist acts against our people. It killed our people.

This President has gone after the bad guys in a furious way, and we have taken out terrorists in places where they never thought we would show up.

We had the 10th Mountain Division guys come up over the top of those mountains at 10,000 feet elevation and, they killed these guys at close range in their foxholes and their fighting positions.

We had people who went to meeting places where they thought they were totally meeting in secret, except for a team of Navy SEALs who had shown up before they did by great exertion and got there ahead of them.

We have got American Marines right now locked in firefights at close range in Fallujah, where literally one mud wall may separate our forces and automatic weapons fire coming from the other side.

So we have gone after the bad guys aggressively and there have been some rewards, and I think Americans reflect on those rewards.

Mr. Khadaffi, who caused us enormous problems and caused us to have to take military action after he killed American servicemen through terrorist activities in Germany, and I remember the strike on the Gulf of Sidra that was made under Ronald Reagan. He decided, and I think one reason he decided was because of what he saw on

his television set, he decided to start turning his nuclear program over to the United States and turning over tens of millions of dollars worth of equipment, and I think that is because he looked at his television set and he saw Saddam Hussein being led out of his spider hole and decided that he did not want to be in that position some day, and so we are now disarming Libya of its nuclear program without firing a shot. That is one result, one reward of having a President who has gone aggressively after the bad guys, and I think Americans understand.

I thought what a great thing as I drove up from the gentleman from Virginia's (Mr. SCHROCK) district the other day, through the gentleman's district and through the gentlewoman from Virginia's (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS) district, what a wonderful thing that we, millions of Americans, live this great life, springtime in America, and you can drive up that highway, you can see the new rose buds coming out and the dogwoods blossoming, and we live this wonderful life with our families in security because we have great people in uniform who are aggressively going after the bad guys.

We found out in 9/11 what happens when we do not aggressively go after the bad guys, when we bomb an empty pharmaceutical plant in response to killings of Americans.

So I think the American people kind of understand that, and I think that has been reflected in every poll, and these things never come wrapped, I have discovered, in neat packages. Nothing ever flows smoothly. Lots of mistakes are made in wars. You have lots of problems with your logistics lines.

I would like to see our armored situations coming along faster than they are. Even though we now have some 7,000 out of our 12,000 Humvees in theater, are now totally remanufactured Humvees or they are up-armored, I would like to see all 12,000 that the Army has up-armored. I would like to see more gun trucks, more armored five tons, seven tons.

This President has aggressively gone after the bad guys, and in those actions and the actions of our great people in uniform we have put the United States in a much better position than we were just a few years ago, and I thank the gentleman for talking about this.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I think one thing that September 11 shows very clearly is that we are going to fight this fight. The question that is left is just where are we going to fight the fight, whether we are going to fight it on our soil, we are going to fight it where the terrorists are.

It is interesting if you took a microphone and interviewed each one of our men and women in uniform, as I know you do when you are in Iraq and you try to talk to them and we talk to them here, to the person, they will tell us this is a fight that we have to win, we need to be there.

One of the things that, as I was just looking at that large group of high school students, I kind of threw away my speech and I was trying to think what could I tell them. The one thing that I told them was whatever you do, do not quit, and I remembered a story of a group of airplanes that had been lost over the Atlantic. They were trying to come into Florida. They had lost communications and it was dark. They were running out of fuel, and they did not know if they were heading in the right direction, and about 15 minutes before the lights would have opened up, they would have seen the base in Florida, they turned around, headed back out to the Atlantic, and they were never heard of again because they quit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just close with one statement that I heard from a sergeant that was over there in Iraq. When we were in Iraq, we stopped by Ramstein Air Force Base. As you know, that is where we take all of our wounded soldier, and there was this young sergeant who was 25 years old, Puerto Rican soldier, who was in there. I went in and I talked to him, and literally in broken English he was telling me his story, how these terrorists had got him in Iraq and he had sent his platoon back. For 2½ hours he would not quit. He continued to fight the terrorists and to fire his gun. They finally came in, took him off on a stretcher. He continued firing.

Mr. Speaker, he was shot in his arm. He was shot in his hip. The bottom bone in his leg was blown out, and when they took him into surgery in Ramstein, the doctors told me that as he was literally heading into surgery he looked at them and said I just have two things to ask you. He said, one, try to save my leg, which they were able to do; and the second thing he told them, which was a refrain we are hearing over and over and over again from our men and women over there, he said get me back to my troops.

I went in and I put my arm on his shoulder, Mr. Speaker, and it was all I could do to hold back the tears, and I said I just do not know, Sergeant, how to thank you for what you have done. Without even thinking about it or batting an eye, he looked at me, and he said, Congressman, it was a privilege for me to be shot for my country and for freedom.

Mr. Speaker, he did not quit on us, and this country is not going to quit on him, and thank you for holding this special order tonight.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for a very, very eloquent statement and for his great service to our country and as a great member of the Committee on Armed Services and his caring for our people in uniform. Thank you very much.

It is a pleasure to call on the gentlewoman from Virginia (Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS), who also is a great supporter of the U.S. military and a great member of the committee. Thanks for being with us.

(Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks, and include extraneous material.)

Mrs. JO ANN DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I want today to express in the strongest possible way my support for our Nation's ongoing missions to sow the seeds of liberty, security and prosperity in Iraq, and as you know and as you said, you have been through my district and you know that I represent an area in Virginia where thousands upon thousands of service members live and train, and those service members I represent and their families and all of our men and women in the military and their families. I want to say right now how much I thank them for everything that they are doing and that they are sacrificing for our country.

It is one of the most honorable things that anybody could do, and most Americans have absolutely no idea how much dedication and commitment it truly takes to do what they do, and for that I and so many of our Members of Congress are truly grateful, as I know all the members on our Committee on Armed Services are.

Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly that Congress and the administration cannot afford to lose sight of how important it is that our mission succeeds in Iraq. Failure is not an option, and the gravity of the implications for the broader war on terror and the security of so many things is so enormous, and I would like to talk a little bit now about our Marines operating in Fallujah and the nobility and the goodness of their brave devotion to duty under fire from a largely faceless enemy. Their courage, their competence and commitment are the hallmark of everything that is and ever will be great about America.

Our duty under Article I, section 8 of the Constitution, not to mention our own constitutional oath, absolutely compels us to make difficult choices in staying the course, regardless of the prevailing political winds at home and overseas. Anything else would dishonor the service of our Marines, our soldiers, sailors and airmen and all others who are supporting our effort, as well as the legacy and the memory of brave generations of all who have gone before them.

Mr. Speaker, I will insert the full text of an April 25, 2004, article from the Los Angeles Times, which I am going to make reference to, with my statement in the record, and I would like to call my colleagues' attention to that article entitled: "Keeping Spirits Up While They Hunker Down; Humor and a Lid on Emotions Help Echo Company's Marines Stay Focused in Fallouja."

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to say that I know a friend and Naval Academy classmate of the commander of Echo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, the unit profiled in this story. The enthusiasm of the Echo Company commander that is ref-

erenced in this story is, as I can tell you firsthand, an absolutely contagious thing.

It is vivid in friends of the company commander halfway around the world, and I trust and pray that it is also in the young Marines under his charge in Echo Company. We should consider ourselves blessed that we have this quality of leadership so abundantly present in our young officers who are on the tip of the spear in Fallujah and places like it.

Captain Doug Zembiec, the leader of Echo Company, embodies everything that we envision in the young American officers with whom we entrust the lives of our young men and women.

I would like to read an excerpt from the article that I referenced before. It reads:

"Just as the chaplain Saturday started to lead a group of Marines in song, a Marine sniper on the roof let loose several thunderous rifle blasts at armed insurgents moving into position for a possible attack. If the Marines in the room below took any notice, they didn't show it. Instead, they launched into 'Lord, we lift Your name on high.'

"For the young men of Echo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, the sound of sniper fire, or mortar rounds, rockets or bursts from automatic weapons is hardly noticeable anymore.

"Other companies and other battalions have done their share of fighting in Fallujah, but none have done more than Echo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment, 1st Marine Division," and I am still quoting from the article.

"All military groups take on the personality of their commander. For Echo Company, that's Captain Douglas Zembiec, 31, of Albuquerque, a balding, gregarious man who, in glasses, looks like a high school science teacher but was a former wrestler at the Naval Academy.

"Zembiec believes in leading from the front. He led the charge into hostile fire that started the Marine assault April 6 on the neighborhood and has been known to disregard his own safety to get a clear radio transmission during combat.

"His admiration for his troops is hard to contain.

"They're fired up, they're motivated,' he said while filling out forms requesting medals for bravery for several of his men. 'These are young men who grew up wanting to be defenders. What other kind of job has this kind of honor and danger?'

"Gunnery Sergeant Daniel Jonas, 35, of San Diego, who served in Operation Desert Storm and Kosovo, said Zembiec's enthusiasm and his policy of giving authority to enlisted Marines have helped sustain morale.

"This is a very close company,' he said.

"There are, inevitably, strong bonds formed from facing danger and from their mutual dependence.

"We're out here for each other,' said Private First Class Bernard Boykin, 21, of Eugene, Oregon. 'I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.'

"And what will the men of Echo Company remember when it is over?

"I'll always remember the good times, the jokes, the stories,' said Lance Corporal Chris Hankins, 19, of Kansas City, Missouri. 'But the bad things, the dead bodies, seeing my friends bleeding and being carried away, I hope to forget that.'

Mr. Speaker, it is beyond me how any American could read this article's capsule of a leader's laser-like vision of his mission, the resolve of those under his charge, and the mutual esteem and faith that they are driven by and not be deeply moved and humbled. It should remind us to the depths of our being how fortunate we are to be Americans.

It is the service of Echo Company and their contemporaries that we cannot dishonor by failing to stabilize Iraq. Regardless of one's view on what led us there, our vision of the need to stay the course there absolutely must be a common one. As you have said, Mr. Speaker, we have got to remain steady, and that is the one thing that is the message that we have got to send to the American people, we have got to send to our troops who are over there fighting for us.

Before closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize Colonel Michael Shupp, our former Marine House liaison director who will shortly be assuming command of the 1st Marine Regiment in Iraq.

Colonel Shupp took me on my first CODEL to Afghanistan, and I have watched him as he has been readying to change and to go over to Iraq to command the 1st Marine Regiment in Iraq.

□ 1845

And I have seen the excitement and the grin on his face that you cannot keep him from showing when he is ready to leave to go over and do his duty. That is what our Marines are like. That is what every one of our men and women in uniform are like. That is why we have to stay steady on this course.

Colonel Shupp, who is a proud graduate of VMI, has been a treasured friend to all of us, and I know I speak for all 434 of my colleagues. We will sorely miss him, but I know that our country needs people like Captain Zembiec, that I referenced, and Michael Shupp if we are to succeed in fulfilling our oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the gentleman from California and all the members of the House Committee on Armed Services who have fought so diligently to fight and protect and give our men and women in the military what they need so that we can stay the course and stay steady.

Mr. Speaker, I submit for the RECORD the Los Angeles Times article I referred to earlier.

[From the Los Angeles Times, Apr. 25, 2004]

THE WORLD; KEEPING SPIRITS UP WHILE THEY HUNKER DOWN; HUMOR AND A LID ON EMOTIONS HELP ECHO COMPANY'S MARINES STAY FOCUSED IN FALLOUJA

(By Tony Perry)

FALLOUJA, IRAQ.—Just as the chaplain Saturday started to lead a group of Marines in song, a Marine sniper on the roof let loose several thunderous rifle blasts at armed insurgents moving into position for a possible attack.

If the Marines in the room below took any notice, they didn't show it. Instead, they launched into "Lord, we lift your name on high."

For the young men of Echo Company of the 2nd Battalion, 1st Regiment of the 1st Marine Division, the sound of sniper fire—or mortar rounds, rockets or bursts from automatic weapons—is hardly noticeable anymore.

Other companies and other battalions have done their share of fighting in Fallouja, but none have done more than Echo company of the 2/1.

Hunkered down in several adjoining two-story homes in an abandoned, bullet-ridden neighborhood in the northwestern corner of the city, the Marines of Echo Company have engaged in skirmishes with insurgents nearly every day for three weeks.

And if the order comes for a full-out assault on the city center, there is no doubt that Echo Company will be a major part of the operation.

"This is what Marines do," said Sgt. Casey Olson, 26, of Fargo, N.D. "They fight."

They also laugh, grieve and bottle up their emotions to stay focused on the heavily armed insurgents who lie only a few hundred yards away.

Despite a cease-fire agreement and a call for the people of Fallouja to relinquish their heavy weapons, arranged with the help of Iraqi mediators, the troops of Echo Company, and the battalion's other companies, Fox and Golf, have been attacked daily.

Last week, Echo Company fought a five-hour battle with insurgents, leaving three Marines wounded and scores of insurgents dead or injured.

The notion of a cease-fire has brought a kind of sarcastic battlefield humor.

The insurgents aren't really firing mortar rounds at the Marines, they're only trying to turn in their mortars one shell at a time, the troops joke. And those insurgents running between houses with AK-47s and rocket-propelled grenades? They are actually running to a Marine checkpoint to give up their weaponry.

The floors of the homes occupied by Echo Company are a jumble of weapons, sleeping bags, magazines, DVDs, MRE rations, cartridge belts, letters from home.

Concrete walls have been knocked down between rooms and between houses to keep the Marines from having to venture into alleys.

The Marines cordoned off the city five days after four U.S. civilian security contractors were slain and their bodies mutilated.

Marines sleep 10 or more to a room. Snipers are on the roofs, streets are blocked with concertina wire, and houses are barricaded with sandbags. The formerly vibrant, middle-class neighborhood has become a ghost town after residents fled the fighting.

There is no water or electricity; the sewer system has stopped functioning. Resupply convoys arrive under heavy protection. The wind carries dust storms down the streets

and the sound and sight of mortar rounds and rockets fill the evening darkness.

The insurgents, several hundred yards away, have been using mosques as rallying spots. The minaret of one mosque offers a direct view of the alley between the homes occupied by the Marines, a perfect vantage point for insurgent snipers.

Two weeks ago, two members of Echo Company were killed and seven wounded during an attack by insurgents. The painful memory lingers.

"It was the worst night of my life," said Navy medical corpsman Jason Duty, 20, of New London, Conn. "You take classes, symposiums, training on mass casualties, but it slaps you in the face when you see nine guys bleeding, screaming."

A small memorial with a tiny American flag has been erected for the two Marines killed: Lance Cpl. Robert Zurheide of Tucson and Lance Cpl. Brad Shuder of El Dorado Hills, Calif.

"You just can't think about it, you can't," said Lance Cpl. Christopher Rodriguez, 19, of Des Moines. "You just keep pushing forward."

Rodriguez says he notices things that lift his spirits when he is on patrol and entering other abandoned houses looking for insurgents.

"You see things—like baby pictures and a Barbie doll, maybe some toys," Rodriguez said. "You realize these are people who want a good life. And we can help them have it."

Lt. Ben Wagner, 27, of San Diego said the Marines of Echo Company have had to build "an emotional wall" to block out things that could distract them.

"It's not easy or fun. But as platoon commander, if I'm sad or upset, it affects other people," Wagner said. "The same is true of the other Marines. You have to stay focused on the job, even if it's hard."

"Two-thirds of the company served in the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 that toppled Saddam Hussein's regime. Now, its members say, it's more difficult, more confusing, more tragic.

"It's worse this time," said Cpl. Joshua Hill, 22, of Huntsville, Texas. "Last time, we fought the Iraqi army and they surrendered. This time, it's like we're fighting the Iraqi people and they don't understand we're trying to help them."

Olson agreed that "they seem more determined this time. We're going to be beat them, but they seem more determined."

All military groups take on the personality of their commander. For Echo Company, that's Capt. Douglas Zembiec, 31, of Albuquerque, a balding, gregarious man who, in glasses, looks like a high school science teacher but was a former wrestler at the Naval Academy.

Zembiec believes in leading from the front. He led the charge into hostile fire that started the Marine assault April 6 on the neighborhood and has been known to disregard his own safety to get a clear radio transmission during combat.

His admiration for his troops is hard to contain.

"They're fired up, they're motivated," he said while filling out forms requesting medals for bravery for several of his men. "These are young men who grew up wanting to be defenders. . . . What other kind of job has this kind of honor and danger?"

Asked what kind of day his Marines are having, Zembiec said, "A terrific day. We just whacked two [insurgents] running down an alley with AK-47s."

Gunnery Sgt. Daniel Jonas, 35, of San Diego, who served in Operation Desert Storm and Kosovo, said Zembiec's enthusiasm and his policy of giving authority to enlisted Marines have helped sustain morale.

"This is a very close company," Jonas said.

There are, inevitably, strong bonds formed from facing danger and from their mutual dependence.

"We're out here for each other," said Pfc. Bernard Boykin, 21, of Eugene, Ore. "I wouldn't want to be anywhere else."

And what will the men of Echo Company remember when it is over?

"I'll always remember the good times, the jokes, the stories," said Lance Cpl. Chris Hankins, 19, of Kansas City, Mo. "But the bad things, the dead bodies, seeing my friends bleeding and being carried away, I hope to forget that."

"I never want to think about that again."

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for her great service on the Committee on Armed Services and her dedication to our people in uniform. What a wonderful, wonderful statement she has made, and especially relating it to the people that wear the uniform, because they are literally America's heart and soul over in that military theater.

So I thank the gentlewoman from Virginia very much, and now I would like to yield to the gentlewoman's colleague, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SCHROCK), who has done a great job on our committee and works very hard and has served our people in uniform, so he has a little background there himself.

Let me ask the gentleman what his take is on the situation in Iraq right now. How does my colleague see it?

Mr. SCHROCK. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am totally convinced that our men and women know exactly what they are doing. They are proud to be there and doing exactly what we task them to do. It looks like we have made some major headway today in Fallujah. I think it was long past time when we did do that. This constant drip, drip, drip of our folks getting injured and killed could only go on so long, and I think we gave those people far and enough time to get out of there so we could go in there. Now they have done that; and, hopefully, we are going to bring a little peace to that area and will settle things down.

The interesting thing is I think Americans believe when they see actions like Fallujah, that the whole country is on fire and the whole country is being bombed. It is not. Most of the country is stable and being brought back to life. Schools are open, courts are open, the water systems are up and running, sewer systems are up and running. But when we have one little area like that that is being attacked, the perception is that the whole country is like that, and it is not.

It is interesting, our men and women know what they are doing and they do a great job. And even those who have been injured and brought to field hospitals want to get well and get back again. They want to go back to join the folks they were fighting with so they can bring this thing to a conclusion because they know it is the right thing to do.

I think that is the story that, unfortunately, does not get out very often.

Good news is no news in so many cases, and there are so many good stories over there that are going on. It is a shame the American people are not allowed to share in those. And I think the news media, unfortunately, has not done a good enough job of showing the good-news stories in Iraq. That is said not only for our men and women but for their families back home.

Mr. HUNTER. I think the gentleman understands, too, that there is no substitute in terms of a dramatic picture on the television screen for a burning truck or for an explosion or bullet-riddled vehicle. That, unfortunately, tends to sell more Coca Cola

Mr. SCHROCK. It does.

Mr. HUNTER. I would compare it to some of the TV stations who say we are going to make our 5 o'clock news wall to wall wrecks. We are not going to have a lot of content, but we are going to have wall to wall wrecks, and we will get a certain viewership just from doing that. I think nationally you see the same thing. So they do not see the good things. An electric line being hooked up will put you to sleep, and it is nothing like a burning vehicle. I think that is one of the things that we are fighting against. I am glad the gentleman is here to talk about the accomplishments.

Mr. SCHROCK. Mr. Speaker, I think it is kind of a sad commentary, too, because our folks are doing such a great job. When they see all the bad stuff and when they know they are doing the good stuff, it demoralizes them.

The two times I have been privileged to be in Iraq, these men and women are so supercharged about what they are doing and know they are doing the right thing. Whether they are active duty, Reserve, or Guard, they all work together as one big unit, and I think we should be very, very proud of every single one of them.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for those great statements because he has worn the uniform for a long time himself. The gentleman's feeling is that our people have good morale?

Mr. SCHROCK. I think the morale is very, very good; and I think I have something to compare it with. I was privileged to serve my country in Vietnam for a couple of years, so I know what good morale is and what it is not. I think the morale of these young men is far better than it ever was when I was in Vietnam. Because, frankly, this President made it very clear what the mission was and what the end game was. When we send people in there knowing that is what they need to do and they need to get it done fairly quickly, people will serve and serve very well; and they will be enthusiastic about it.

We did not do that in Vietnam. We played a limited war game in Vietnam, and we were never in there to win.

This President is in there to win the war on terror. Because if we do not, it will be spread not only to the countries

of the Middle East but everywhere and right here on our soil. And, frankly, I would rather fight it on their soil than have to fight it here at some point.

Mr. HUNTER. What is interesting, too, Mr. Speaker, is that those who have stepped back from the fray, some of the Arab nations, like Saudi Arabia, have now discovered that they are targets; that you cannot, by staying away from this fight that the Americans have taken on, because we face our threats head on and take them on, they thought somehow they could stay out of the battle and they could stay away from the brutality of the terrorist groups. But they have discovered now they cannot do that. Jordan is discovering it cannot avoid this conflict.

And I think there is another thing, too, that the world understands, and perhaps more leaders in the world need to be educated on this. We won World War II. We could have enslaved Germany and Japan. And certainly after what Japan did to us with the surprise attack at Pearl Harbor, the Japanese people were told by their military leaders to expect us to be as brutal to them as they had been to other people. They decapitated our POWs. They killed about a third of them. They killed 100,000 people when they took Nan-King, China. They speared live people on their bayonet courses. They captured Chinese civilians.

They did all these brutal, horrible things, and they warned their people, they are now going to do to us what we have done to them. But American GIs walked down the streets of Tokyo and handed out Hershey bars. That character has not changed.

When we look at the guys walking down the streets of Baghdad with a bunch of kids standing around them, we see the same character. In fact, many of those guys are the grandchildren of people who served in World War II and the children of people who served in Vietnam.

That takes me to one thing, too, that I thought was very relevant, and that is the fight over the Presidency and Senator KERRY's participation in the Vietnam War, for which he should be credited, but also the accountability that he should take for what he said about his fellow GIs.

If we were to take three of the statements Senator KERRY has said, the one where he said 80 percent of us were stoned on dope 24 hours a day; the one where he said that we murdered 200,000 people, that was two of those statements; and the one where he said that we ravaged the countryside, cutting off limbs and murdering people in a manner, quote, reminiscent of Ghengis Khan, if Senator KERRY had said that our GIs in Iraq, as they were driving up that country, if he had come on television and said the American soldiers in Iraq are stoned 24 hours a day, 80 percent of them; that they have murdered 200,000 Iraqis, and they are ravaging Iraq in a manner reminiscent of Ghengis Khan, the American people

would be picketing his office by the tens of thousands, and he would be on his way out immediately.

So if we just juxtapose and take off that word Vietnam from the statement he made in 1971, where he said American GIs were ravaging Vietnam like Ghengis Khan and had murdered 200,000 people, if we took out Vietnam and put Iraq on it, I think Americans today can understand why a lot of Vietnam veterans feel no close kinship to Senator KERRY. Because those guys that were driving up there through the heart of Iraq taking that shot and shell and heading for Baghdad, those kids were the same guys we had in Vietnam. Many of them were the sons and grandsons. Same character, same characteristics, same sense of honor, and doing the same great thing for the people.

Lastly, I remember the pictures of the people, of all the hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who tried to swim after the Americans after we left Vietnam. I remember also the pictures of the people being held in the Hong Kong camps who were now going to be forcibly repatriated back to what I guess Mr. KERRY's cohorts would call the people's working paradise in Vietnam. They were holding on to the guards and they were shrieking and they were beside themselves. They would do anything and had to be sedated to be finally put on the planes to be carried back to Communist Vietnam.

That showed, to a large degree, the character of the Americans that had been in Vietnam. If we had been bad to the people, they would not have tried to swim after us after we left. And they are today in our populations by the hundreds of thousands.

So I thought about that when I watched that embedded news following our kids in the 1st Marine Division in Iraq and following the 101st Airborne and the 3rd Army and the 4th Infantry Division. Same people, same GIs, same good people.

Mr. SCHROCK. And, Mr. Speaker, the chairman of our House Committee on Armed Services is absolutely right. And if, in fact, he witnessed those sorts of events and did not try to do anything about that, then shame on him. He should have. Where I was in Vietnam, I never experienced people who acted like that, and I do not think we have men and women in Iraq doing that now. They are there to do their duty. They are not engaged in all those other activities he accused others of doing in Vietnam, and I think that is a sad commentary.

Mr. HUNTER. Well, I think American Vietnam veterans should simply look at his statements, and if they agree with those statements, if they did those things, and they think that is accurate, then they should vote for Mr. KERRY.

Mr. SCHROCK. That is right. And I was part of Operation New Life when I was stationed on Guam. We had 130,000 refugees come on packed boats so they

could get out of there and come to a better life. So, believe me, they wanted to get out of there just as the Iraqis want the freedom we are giving them.

One thing many Iraqis told me when I was there was, please do not cut and run, because we had had such a habit of doing that. They were afraid they would start supporting our efforts to free them and we would back away and they would have to pay the penalty.

But this President is determined to get this thing done and get it done right, and he is not going to cut and run. We have to stay the course as long as it takes.

Mr. HUNTER. Stay steady.

Mr. SCHROCK. Stay steady.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman.

Mr. SCHROCK. Mr. Speaker, I really thank the gentleman from California for his leadership. I hope the people in California's 52nd District realize how fortunate they are to have a man of his caliber representing them back here at this particular time in our history. The gentleman understands it better than most because he is the parent of one of these men that is involved in this battle. And there is nothing like that to make one realize exactly what is important. So to the gentleman and his wife, Lynn, we thank them; and we are sure Duncan will come home very safely and very soon.

Mr. HUNTER. Well, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the gentleman not praise me too much, because this Special Order has to stay credible.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his great remarks, and I now want to welcome the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), who is carrying on the great tradition of Floyd Spence, my great buddy and friend and former chairman of the Committee on Armed Services. I thank him for the sacrifices his family has made and he has made in being in the service, and for his dedication to our people in uniform.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from California, and we appreciate greatly our colleague's past military service, we appreciate his service now as chairman of the Committee on Armed Services, and we are very grateful for the service of his son, who is currently in Iraq. We are just so pleased that the gentleman is leading the effort to explain to the American people the significance of the war on terrorism.

Mr. Speaker, I will be providing for the RECORD a prepared statement, but I would like to give a brief synopsis, and it really relates to earlier this month my having had the opportunity to serve on a bipartisan delegation led by the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS) and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE).

The intent of our trip was to visit Iraq. On the way, though, we had several stops. First, it was to Qatar, then Iraq, then Jordan, and then Hungary. What I found out at every place that we stopped is that the war on terror is coming into place, and we have thou-

sands of allies, professionals, working together to provide in the war on terror protection for the American people.

When we first arrived in Qatar itself, we visited with the Iraqi Survey Group, and we found that there are hundreds of linguists putting together 32 million pieces of evidence, paper, video tape, computer disks, and computers themselves to put together the whole story and history of the Saddam Hussein dictatorship. This can be used for the later situation of a war crimes trial. Additionally, it can be used for putting together identification of criminals who are in the country of Iraq, in order to protect American soldiers.

Then we visited Iraq itself, and I was very pleased at the airport to visit with the FBI command post and found the very dedicated FBI agents who are working to uncover the different bombings that have occurred in Iraq in order to protect the American citizens who are in Iraq.

□ 1900

We also helicoptered to Kirkush to visit with the North Carolina Army National Guard. While we were there, we of course met with troops from our home State, from my situation in South Carolina. It was a 2-day visit. At each stop we would visit with enlisted personnel, junior officers, and in meeting with them, it was so encouraging. When I was there in September, the young service members told me that 70 to 90 percent of the people that they met on the streets, and that is how they patrol. It is not by speeding Humvees. They walk the streets. Seventy to 90 percent are supportive of the liberation of their country and the ability to develop a democratic Iraq. Now when I was there just this month, the number is 90 percent. I kept stretching and asking them, are you sure? They told me that indeed the people are supportive of the efforts made by all of our allies. We have got 32 countries with 25,000 troops in Iraq working to build a democratic country.

We also had the opportunity to visit with personnel who had helped reestablish the Ministry of Health in Iraq. Currently there are 240 hospitals in Iraq which are open and 1,200 primary health care clinics. This is extraordinary because traditionally that has not been available for the average citizens. Health care was for the elite of the Baath Socialist Party.

Additionally, we visited Jordan. In visiting Jordan, I found visiting the International Police Training Center that there are professional police from 20 countries who are training in classes of 500 Iraqi police. Ultimately by the end of next year, 32,000 police officers will be trained to serve in Iraq. That night I visited with the chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AmCham, in Jordan, who told me that there have been two business conferences where there are in place contracts to establish hopefully over a million new jobs in the country of Iraq.

This is extraordinary, the progress being made.

Finally, we came back through Hungary. We visited the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest, where since 1995 law enforcement officers have been trained to fight organized crime and they are preparing for police officers from Iraq to fight organized crime which works with terrorism. I am so encouraged by the visit to Hungary. It was symbolic. Fifteen years ago, Hungary was a totalitarian police state. Today it is a democratic member of NATO. Nobody would have ever dreamed this could occur in 15 years. That is the vision that our President has for the Middle East, that it be democratic, that it be peaceful and that it protect the people of the United States from terrorist activities.

I thank the gentleman again for his efforts.

Thank you Mr. Chairman, we appreciate your past military service and now chairmanship of Armed Services Committee, we are grateful for your son serving in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, during the first week of April, I served on a bipartisan delegation led by Congressmen MIKE ROGERS and BOB ETHERIDGE to visit Iraq, but I found every stop in Qatar, Iraq, Jordan, and Hungary to be a crucial part of the Global War on Terror.

I saw first hand courageous coalition forces of dozens of nations working with determination to stop terrorism from destroying modern civilization. Without fanfare or attention, American families are being protected by professionals who are making every reasonable effort to keep the terrorists on the defensive overseas and deter further attacks on civilians in North America.

As the media correctly reported the violence of the week in Iraq, the global interrelation with terrorism was evidenced by another bombing in Madrid while terrorist cells with truck loads of explosives were arrested in England and Jordan. The worldwide conflict is not solely war in Iraq. The Jordanian explosives yesterday were revealed to include chemicals which could kill up to 80,000 civilians.

In Qatar, we were immediately taken to Camp As Sayliyah for a briefing by the Iraqi Survey Group. Hundreds of linguists and analysts are cataloging 32 million documents retrieved from Iraqi Government ministries, terrorist sites, Saddam Hussein's many palaces, and dual-use laboratories to recreate a paper, computer disk, and videotape history of the Hussein dictatorship.

The evidence of war crimes will be presented at upcoming trials and the recovered individual criminal records can now be used to protect American troops from violent criminals released by Hussein prior to Iraq's liberation.

Visiting troops from South Carolina was a highlight of my trip, and I enjoyed seeing personnel of all ranks enthusiastic with high morale. It was especially meaningful to meet with Columbian Major David G. Ellison who still has a will I prepared for him when I was a mobilization JAG officer with the S.C. Army National Guard.

With 2 days in Iraq at the height of renewed violence we found morale high, and the South Carolina troops who patrol by walking the streets said 90 percent of the Iraqis were

grateful for liberation, which is higher than the estimates I learned in a September visit. My appreciation for the troops and their families is profound. My oldest son is now deployed in Iraq, and I was able to speak by phone with him as he begins his year of active duty.

In Baghdad, we visited the FBI Command Post where experienced agents from across America lead investigations of identifying terrorists, uncovering terrorist financing, and analyzing bombings and murders of Americans. This came to life with Congressman ROGERS, a former FBI agent, and by the accompaniment of Indianapolis Special Agent in Charge Tom Fuentes who has an extensive career of professional investigation.

We helicoptered to Kirkush to visit with the newly arrived troops of the North Carolina Army National Guard. Their morale was high as it was explained that the local Iraqi security forces were making a real impact establishing order. Proof of the local forces' effectiveness is that Hussein loyalists are brutally attacking them with the Iraqis fighting back with a new resolve to build democracy.

In concluding our briefings we met with Jim Haveman, formerly Community Health Director of Michigan, who explained the upgrading of Iraqi healthcare. The previous system, which was totally focused for the Baath Socialist Party members, has been expanded for all citizens and the Ministry of Health was among the first to be transferred to Iraqi control. All 240 Iraqi hospitals and more than 1,200 primary care clinics are open.

Visiting Jordan was an unexpectedly pleasant surprise. Jordanians are enthusiastic in helping the coalition rebuild Iraq because a stable Iraq protects Jordan's growing economy.

At the Jordan International Police Training Center, professional police from 20 nations are training classes of 500 Iraqi police trainees with a goal of producing 32,000 graduates by December 2005. Without notice or preselection our delegation interviewed four Iraqi students who told of their heartfelt desire to play a role in building a democratic Iraq.

That evening I met with the Chairman of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) in Jordan. The AmCham had recently hosted in Jordan a second business conference on Iraq, together with Amman World Trade Centers. The conference was attended by many Iraqi business people during which it was suggested that contracts that are either in place or soon to be awarded to hopefully create more than 1 million new jobs in Iraq. The AmCham is promoting Jordan for the value it offers as a launching pad for doing business in Iraq.

Hungary is home of the International Law Enforcement Academy at Budapest where since 1995 police officers from formerly communist nations have been trained to detect and fight financial and organized crime. Iraqis will soon join the classes to learn of the relationships between organized crime and terrorism, which work to acquire financing and provide munitions.

In the former totalitarian police state of Hungary, which is now a dynamic member of NATO, it is a dream come true to see freedom flourish in just 15 short years of democracy. President Bush has this same vision of democracy for the Middle East, which he knows will benefit the people of the region and is the best way to protect American families from fu-

ture terrorist attacks. Just as in Hungary, the road is bumpy, but the benefits are crucial for peace and freedom. After World War II we rebuilt Germany to deter it from being a breeding ground for communists and now in Iraq we can stop it from being a breeding ground for terrorists.

September 11 confirmed we are in a global war we did not seek, but we clearly now have a choice of fighting terrorists overseas at their homes or we will fight them in America at our homes. From Qatar to Iraq to Jordan to Hungary competent and dedicated patriots are making a difference.

In conclusion God Bless our Troops, we will not forget the attacks of September 11.

Mr. HUNTER. I thank the gentleman for his remarks.

COMPARISON OF VOTING RECORDS IN REGARD TO NATIONAL DEFENSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BARRETT of South Carolina). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. HUNTER. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman for yielding. I have been watching the national debate and, of course, all of the talk shows and all of the discussion about Senator KERRY's service to the country, the President's service to the country, who is patriotic, who is not patriotic. I think that it is important to lay out in lines of demarcation across what is fair political comment and what is not. I think that, first, service to our country gives any Member who has served, especially in a war like Vietnam, the platform, the right, to certainly have a position, a credible position on what we should do with respect to national defense. On the other hand, service in the military does not by and of itself mean that you are not accountable for, if you are elected to Congress, your voting record.

What I would like to do is to simply say that I have no quarrel with Senator KERRY's having served in Vietnam. I think that is a good thing and I think that being a veteran is something people should be commended for. On the other hand, I think it is very important to say that that is not a substitute for a strong defense voting record. I heard several people attacking the President the other day and Vice President CHENEY in particular, saying that Vice President CHENEY had a poor voting record on defense and that Senator KERRY had a good voting record on defense. So what I did was go to the Almanac of American Politics, which puts together a series of ratings on Congressmen and Senators. It is done by the National Journal. It is considered to be nonpartisan. It is considered to have a great deal of credibility. They give people ratings by groups that they think are good, honest brokers of where you stand in particular areas.

For example, I have, I think, a fairly low AFL-CIO rating. Other Members of Congress have a high rating. That rating is in the National Journal, where people can open it up and see my rating. Senator KERRY also has a rating from the American Security Council. He has a rating that was given at the same time that he was in the Senate that the Vice President, RICHARD CHENEY, was in the House of Representatives, and in which a real barometer for being a good, strong defense Democrat, Sam Nunn of Georgia, was in the Senate. I looked at this rating. The rating at the time when they were all three in Congress, Vice President CHENEY, at that time Congressman CHENEY, had a 100 percent American Security Council rating for being strong on national defense as reported by the Almanac of American Politics. Sam Nunn, Democrat from Georgia, had a 100 percent rating for being strong on national defense under the American Security Council rating system as reported in the Almanac of American Politics put out by National Journal. Senator KERRY had a zero for a national defense voting record as rated by the American Security Council, as reported by the National Journal's Almanac of American Politics. Once again Vice President CHENEY, 100 percent in votes in support of a strong national defense. Sam Nunn, Democrat from Georgia, 100 percent for a strong national defense. Senator JOHN KERRY, zero.

I do not think we should continue to debate ad nauseam Senator KERRY's record with respect to Vietnam. I think his words when he testified to the Senate and said that American servicemen had murdered 200,000 people, I think he should be accountable for that. I think he should be accountable for the statement when he said that 80 percent of them were stoned on pot 24 hours a day and that they ravaged the country like Genghis Khan. But I do not think that we should ad nauseam debate his service. We should, though, debate his voting record and whether that voting record portends well for the United States of America in terms of a strong national security should he become President of the United States. I think that we ought to go to the record, we ought to get off this who shot JOHN and who is bad and who is good and who served and who did not, but go to the voting record and analyze who would be best in terms of making a strong national security apparatus for our country. In my estimation, that is not Senator KERRY.

I again thank the gentleman for yielding.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Madam Speaker, it certainly is my honor and my pleasure