

as a bully. She then earned a national reputation as a serious and credible journalist of the first magnitude.

She grabbed the heart of the Nation with her coverage of President Kennedy's assassination. Her poetic tribute to his life and gentle commentary of his funeral comforted a grieving Nation.

The national spotlight shined on Mary again in 1974 when she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for commentary for her coverage of the Watergate scandal. She was most proud that her coverage landed her a spot on President Nixon's notorious "enemies list." That recognition served not as a warning to tame her merciless analysis but as a validation for her relentless work ethic.

When the Washington Star closed its doors in 1981, Mary was devastated. I am convinced, I believe, that she had lost her own true love. Although she would continue to write for the Washington Post, whom she also loved, her first allegiance was to the Star.

My colleague has already talked about the wonderful work that she did with the orphans and the children needing help in this city for more than 5 decades, but I can never forget Mary McGrory the entertainer. I was a proud member of the Lower Macomb Street Choral Society for which we had to audition. Whether one was a diplomat, a media member, or anybody, they had to audition for that group in the comfort of her living room. Her infamous lasagnas fed our stomachs and her favorite Irish songs fed our hearts. It was a coveted invitation to go to McComb Street, and then for the last 10 years, Mary and I have had dinner together here in the Capitol just before the State of the Union address, and the next one for me will be extremely lonely.

I last spoke with her on the day that the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI) rescued the portrait of Mary Theresa Norton from one of the Capitol closets. She had been the Chair of the Committee on Labor and was responsible for child labor laws and the fair labor standards, and we knew nothing about her. We were happy that day to find an article that Mary had written about Congresswoman Norton where she quoted the gentleman from Michigan's (Mr. DINGELL) father as saying that Mary Theresa Norton could do anything that any man could do and do it better and do it faster, and it was a great honor to pay to her.

I would like to end with one of Mary's favorite songs that we sang together with Phil Gailey sometimes at 2 and 3 in the morning, and they sang this at her funeral, and I know the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS), who is here in the audience, will know this.

I'll meet you in the morning
With a how do you do
And will sit down the river
And with rapture old acquaintance renew.
You'll know me in the morning
By the smile that I wear

When I meet you in the morning
In the city Four Square.

I will meet you there, Mary.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take my Special Order at this time.

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

There was no objection.

ABU GHRAIB PRISON

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

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, as an American, I am ashamed and disgusted by the horrendous unspeakable acts at Abu Ghraib prison caught in pictures and displayed around the world. The impact of these images is devastating precisely in the part of the world where we are already struggling to counter the widespread impression that we do not respect the Arab world and Islamic traditions.

There is no excuse for these pictures and the acts shown. There is no excuse for a Secretary of Defense to be out of the loop and then deliver an apology that sounds like a lecture. I have listened repeatedly to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld dismissively brush aside penetrating questions from Members of Congress about both his policies and their execution.

We have seen Rumsfeld and his civilian managers at the Pentagon fail to appreciate and understand concerns from their uniformed command structure. They have dismissed the truth tellers like General Eric Shinseki who gave an honest and accurate assessment of troop requirements. They have removed people within the administration like White House National Economic Council Director Larry Lindsey who was candid about the cost of this war.

At one time I thought Rumsfeld's refusal to put a price on the projected cost on the mission he was leading was because he was trying to hide it.

While it is true there has been no excess of candor from this crew, it is becoming more and more clear that another reason that Rumsfeld and his team have not been forthcoming is that they probably really do not know. They have not a clue and repeatedly do not appear to care that they do not know.

The most recent example from the guy who is always trying to look like he is in charge but not knowing what is going on is the report of the abuse of Iraqi prisoners which has forced the President into a series of embarrassing efforts to apologize. A war that has begun with the exaggerated threats of weapons of mass destruction has morphed into a war that is based upon, well, I frankly do not begin to under-

stand the latest justification. It took reporters like Seymour Hersh of the New Yorker to force other reporters to know what they knew and only when the truth behind the administration's contradictions and misinformation is exposed does the administration acknowledge that there may be a problem. And now months after a report that highlighted these problems, there is a grudging acknowledgment and apparently some steps are being taken to correct it after widespread damage to our credibility, damage to our already low-standing in the Arab world, and giving a green light to people who take our troops and other American citizens hostage as we have lost moral authority to effectively protest abuse of our people.

The administration does not know what is going on and clearly they are unsure about what to do. They are spending huge sums of money on private contractors that is not just eating up far more than it would take to equip U.S. troops properly but blurs lines of responsibility. They do not know whom to hold accountable, and if they did, it is unclear what they can do to these independent contractors other than canceling a contract.

I think it is clear four things need to happen. First, we should open our Iraqi prisons to independent third-party monitoring by the United Nations and International Red Cross. There is a reason why we should honor constitutional protections and commit to international standards of law and prisoner treatment. We should stop delegating to unaccountable private contractors functions that should be under the direct control and supervision of United States military uniformed command. We need to get a new Secretary of Defense, somebody who really is on top of the situation and who does read reports, who is not dismissive of our allies, of Congress, and of his own uniformed command.

Most important, for those of us who are in Congress, we should be finding out ourselves about these issues, not relying on the New Yorker and CNN.

There was a time when congressional panels, oversight committees were exercising oversight. We can grumble about the administration, but failure to do our job is only our fault.

PRISONERS IN IRAQ

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

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, we are all shocked, saddened, and outraged by recent reports of the abuse of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan. The evidence cannot be in dispute. Graphic photos have gone from one end of the earth to the other that show stripped young Iraqi men forced to lie in a naked pile with a male and female soldier standing over them and hamming for the camera. Whether we like it or not, the

picture of a hooded, wired prisoner, which one commentator described as an eerie throwback to drawings from the Spanish Inquisition, has become the new image of the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

And this hooded image may be one of the kinder and gentler images to have yet seen the light of day. A highly critical report completed by the Pentagon in March paints a much more graphic and disturbing picture of prisoner abuse. The report outlines a number of intentional abuses, and I will quote partly from it: "videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees; forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions for photographing," and "a male MP guard having sex with a female detainee; sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broomstick; and threatening male detainees with rape."

Yes, we are all sickened and outraged by the photos and the reports. The President, his cabinet, military leaders, and the Secretary of Defense have all lined up to say that this is not what America is about; it is just the unfortunate handiwork of a few bad apples, and they will be held accountable for their actions. Perhaps. But as Philip Kennicott writes in today's Washington Post: "These photos show us what we may become as occupation continues, anger and resentment grows and costs spiral. There's nothing surprising in this. These pictures are pictures of colonial behavior, the demeaning of occupied people, the insult to local tradition, the humiliation of the vanquished."

Should it be surprising, however, that these events have occurred under the watchful eye of an administration that prizes secrecy and loyalty above all else?

Mr. Speaker, the prisoner abuse scandal demonstrates that the United States is on the precipice of a major foreign policy disaster. Our standing in the world has been lowered to the point that the United States has been isolated in the court of world opinion. President Mubarak has stated unequivocally that the United States is the most hated Nation in the Middle East. Ouch, that hurts. And sadly, even in other parts of the world, we are no longer viewed as peacemakers but instead as the principal threat to world peace.

To date, the war has cost the taxpayers over \$150 billion. Now we are being told that the war will cost more and that 135,000 U.S. troops will remain in Iraq through 2005. Billions of dollars have been spent to enrich private corporations such as Halliburton and Bechtel. Private contractors are running around even interrogating prisoners with what appears to be less than optimal supervision. Congress has failed thus far to exercise its proper oversight of the war. What additional scandals and outrages are lurking just around the corner?

Mr. Speaker, now is the time to change course in Iraq. The principal architects of the war in Iraq, Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, have presided over a failed policy. It is past due time for them to leave their posts and submit their resignations. The security, safety, and prestige of our Nation is at stake, and we will not win the hearts and the minds of Iraqis, the Arabs, and the rest of the world with blood in the sand.

□ 2000

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. WATSON. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. DREIER. Mr. Speaker, I simply would like to say that while I disagree with the final conclusion that the gentlewoman has just drawn, the outrage that she began stating in her comments is outrage with which we totally agree; and we have been working over the last couple of days since this news came out to bring forward what we hope will be a bipartisan resolution from this House tomorrow. We are going to be meeting, it appears now, possibly early in the morning in the Committee on Rules to report out a resolution which will state our strong condemnation of the actions that we have seen taking place in the treatment of these Iraqi prisoners.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding me time so I could clarify this.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL ALLERGY AND ASTHMA AWARENESS MONTH AND ALLERGY AND ASTHMA AWARENESS DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, this month we are celebrating National Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month. Yesterday was Allergy and Asthma Awareness Day.

Last night, while attending the Allergy and Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics Awards Recognition Dinner, I had the pleasure of meeting two dynamic young people who suffer from asthma and yet are doing amazing things to raise awareness about this respiratory disorder.

Evan Mungan of Arnold, Maryland, and Rachel Lambin of Gardnerville, Nevada, were the recipients of the AANMA Creative Kids Sunny Awards, which highlights drawings, paintings and writings by children who share their feelings about asthma.

Mr. Speaker, Evan won an award for his drawing entitled "Good Day/Bad Day," which is here on the floor, which illustrates the difference between a healthy lung and a lung with asthma.

Rachel wrote this original composition, "When I Can Breathe," which is here on the floor, which expresses her

feelings when the weight of asthma has taken its toll on families.

Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood; and, unfortunately, the number of children and young people with asthma is increasing. About 17 million U.S. citizens have asthma; 5 million of these are children under the age of 18. About one in 13 school-age children has asthma. Health care costs related to asthma are estimated at \$14 billion annually.

Both Rachel and Evan joined me on the floor today, Mr. Speaker, and they had the opportunity to be on the floor with their siblings, John Henry and Anabel, to take part in meeting Members and shaking their hands. They really did enjoy that.

But, Mr. Speaker, the faces of asthma sufferers are the faces of all of our children, and I believe we have a duty to help them. Earlier this Congress, I introduced the Asthma Awareness and Treatment Act of 2003. This legislation allows the HHS Secretary to award contracts for a national media campaign to inform the public and health care providers on asthma, allergies and related respiratory problems, especially in children, and provides research into whether there is a causal relationship between air pollutants and the occurrence of asthma, allergy and related respiratory problems.

I am also proud to cosponsor H.R. 2023, the Asthmatic Schoolchildren's Treatment and Health Management Act of 2003. This legislation would give funding preference to those States that protect students' rights to carry and use prescribed life-saving asthma and other medications.

I would like to thank the AANMA for all of their hard work in making this 7th Annual Asthma Awareness Day on Capitol Hill such a resounding success. I joined with my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), to cochair this year's day on Capitol Hill.

TIME TO GET OUT OF IRAQ

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

Mr. LEWIS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart, but my conscience is clear. I am so sick and tired of seeing so many of our young men and our young women die in Iraq.

Why has our Commander in Chief led them to their deaths in this unnecessary war? What will we tell the parents who will never see their children again? What will we tell the children longing in vain for their mothers and fathers to come home? Why did they die? Why?

After the atrocities we have committed against the Iraq prisoners of war, after the physical and psychological damage we have inflicted on the people of that nation, we can no longer truthfully say we are leading Iraq to freedom. Before the war, we were told that we would be welcomed as liberators.