

Constitution. The ultimate authority of the Constitution is the people of the Union, just like Thomas Jefferson said.

We need to make sure that the Constitution doesn't just stay locked up in a display case at the National Archives on Pennsylvania Avenue. We need to bring it into our homes, our schools, our businesses, and our courtrooms.

Only then can we make sure that our schools are symbols of freedom—that our families are symbols of freedom . . . that our businesses are symbols of freedom . . . that our state legislatures, and local governments are symbols of freedom.

When its all said and done, my greatest desire is for my grandchildren to look back on their grandfather and their neighbors and say, "They left us a better country than they inherited. They cared enough to protect freedom for the generations to come."

Mr. Speaker, I was in Vietnam in 1971, 1972, the early part of 1973, and the early part of 1974. I was in Vietnam flying when Jane Fonda made her visit to the north giving aid and comfort to the enemy.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Vietnam, or on my way there, when the presumptive Democrat candidate threw his ribbons across the fence into the dumpster or his friends or his medals, or some similarity of that representation, of our country.

Mr. Speaker, as I listen to the comments from the floor of the House that said that this war is not winnable, I would remind my colleagues that all wars are unwinnable in the heart; and as they seek to undermine the will of the American people, they should consider carefully what they are doing.

Mr. Speaker, we must complete the job that we started before the terrorists complete the job that they started.

Mr. Speaker, I was in France on 9-11. So I was compelled to fly to come back to this country as soon as flight service was restarted. I came through Dallas-Ft. Worth about 10 days after the attacks.

Mr. Speaker, when I came through Dallas-Ft. Worth regional airport, that bustling busy hub of much of the traffic, the air traffic in the western United States, I think that our plane was the only one deplaning. I looked up and down the corridors and walked the full distance to the baggage check without seeing one other plane deplaning. Mr. Speaker, when I went to get a cab to go to the hotel, there was not one cab available because there were no passengers to ask for cabs.

As I finally got a transport van from the hotel, arrived at the hotel to find that there were very, very few customers in the hotel. Mr. Speaker, our economy was this close to collapsing. If we first lose the airlines and the cab industries and the hotel industries and the hospitality industries, we are looking at losing banks and financial institutions and insurance companies.

Mr. Speaker, the terrorists set out to do a job a decade ago first attacking the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Mr. Speaker, they did that attack in 1993 and then again in 2001. If

we are going to sit on our heels trying a policy of appeasement to deal with the terrorists, I will tell you that the terrorists will win because we cannot sustain repeated attacks on our economy and of the civilian population of America like occurred on September 11, 2001. There are estimates that that cost alone, that one day, exceeded \$2 trillion, Mr. Speaker.

Our economy is \$11 trillion. So we took over 15 percent, close to 20 percent of our economy out in one day, not to mention the 2,000 lives.

Mr. Speaker, what I hear from the House floor and what I hear from my friends on the other side of the aisle sounds more partisan when I put it in context of the many complaints that I should have heard from them under the deployments that President Clinton had. We went into Bosnia in the early part of the 1990s, and President Clinton said we would be out by the end of that year. Instead, troops are still there today. Yet, I do not hear one comment about his deployment into Bosnia.

If the names Kosovo, Somalia, Haiti, and Macedonia do not mean anything to my colleagues, those are additional areas in which the previous President dispatched our troops to try to stabilize a very unstable region.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Clinton launched cruise missiles into Sudan and Iraq, into Haiti with no U.N. resolution. Yet I hear no comments from the floor of this House.

So when I hear my colleagues saying that this war is unwinnable, I think that they are engaged in partisan politics which strikes at the very desire of this country to fight its war. And when I watched the aid and comfort of 1971 and 1972 by the presumptive Democrat candidate for President and Jane Fonda, I am beginning to hear a similar tone.

I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, as one of the Vietnam vets who returned to this country without one public or private official saying thank for your time, Mr. Speaker, I caution our friends to be careful of the rhetoric they use.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair admonishes Members to heed their time limits and to refrain from improper references to Presidential candidates.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to

claim the time of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

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

There was no objection.

MISMANAGEMENT OF WAR IN IRAQ

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

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, I was appalled at the comments that just preceded me.

JOHN KERRY is a brave man today, and he was a brave man 35 years ago when he answered his country's call and was wounded on its behalf. And to hear one say that he came close to giving aid and comfort, of course, that is part of a phrase that describes treason, is unworthy of this House. And to couple that sort of wholly unjustified attack on this brave man because he challenges the President and then to say, well, let us avoid partisan rhetoric, there are no words to describe that that would be acceptable under the rules of the House.

I do want to talk about what is going on in Iraq, and I do it with great sadness. Six months ago if someone had told me that American military personnel and civilians employed by the United States Government had engaged in the kind of outrageous dehumanizing behavior that we have recently seen public, I would have been indignant. I would have said, look, I disagree with the Iraq policy. I did not vote to go to war with Iraq, but I think it is unfair to accuse Americans of this.

And we now say that we have to acknowledge that Americans empowered by the United States Government, not specifically to do that, but they were there because of American government policy, committed these outrageous acts. But it is not enough simply to blame a handful of individuals as the majority tried to do earlier today with a resolution.

I want to stress again how absolutely wrong it was for the Republican majority in the House to bring forward today a resolution on this extraordinarily important question. I am told the President just apologized, as he should have. He should have done it earlier.

We have got a major set-back in American policy but more importantly, a revelation that Americans did things in the name of the country that should not have been contemplated, much less done. And we were only given an hour to discuss it? And the majority used its automatic submissive majority of its Members to prevent any amendment, to prevent any proposal. Many of us believe it is not enough for the military to investigate itself. They have known about this for some time.

First of all, this is the military's failing. Though the Secretary of Defense did not do this in this prison, but the

Secretary of Defense and his aids set up this prison which led this to happen, the inadequate supervision, the whole problem here, this is one which we must thoroughly investigate. And having the perpetrators not of the particular acts but of the efforts that led to these acts investigates themselves is wholly unacceptable.

We were not even allowed because of this automatic submissive majority to offer an amendment to call for that sort of an investigation. I want to stress again, what could be more bizarre than for us to tell the Iraqis that we will teach them how to be democratic, with a small D.

We in particular are telling the Shiites who are in the majority in Iraq, use your majority wisely and prudently. Yes, if you are in the majority you have a right ultimately to make the decision, but please show respect for minority rights. Please encourage openness.

I only hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Iraqis were not watching the debate today because if the Shiites were to emulate the House Republicans in terms of their approach to democracy, then we have very little chance of achieving what we want.

I only hope that people in the leadership of the Shiite movement in Iraq do not take the majority leader of this House as an exemplar of democracy. But it is not simply the inadequate way in which the military has responded to these outrages, and we might never have known if these things were not leaked. The military knew for a long time. They came up here and talked to committees. They misled people when they asked questions about contractors. They left names off lists. The way in which they have handled this was outrageous.

I wish it were an exception. I wish this terrible abuse and these cover ups and this refusal to supervise adequately, I wish it were an exception. But we also had, within the last week or two, the on-again off-again appointment of the Iraqi general in Falujah in which, first of all, we were going to have a war in Falujah. Fortunately, they decided, let us try to minimize the killing. So they appoint an Iraqi general to be in charge.

First we were told he is acceptable to everybody. Then it turned out because of his previous connections to the regime he was unacceptable and a new general comes in.

We have had error after error after error. We have a lack of coordination between the State and Defense Departments. I do not think there has been a major national security operation handled as incompetently as the way this administration has muddled in Iraq in a very long time.

Vietnam ultimately became a terrible set of mistakes, but I do not think in a comparable period Vietnam was as badly handled.

This administration has failed this country in the miserably incompetent way it has handled Iraq.

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

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

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER).

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

There was no objection.

CONDEMNING TREATMENT OF IRAQI DETAINEES

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

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, it is with a mix of anger, sadness, and frustration that I rise in support of the resolution that the House passed earlier today.

Our words can do little to mitigate the damage that has been inflicted upon our Nation, our Armed Forces, and our hopes for better relations with the Islamic world.

Nevertheless, we must offer these words to the Iraqi victims and to the world. All of us have seen the photographs of smiling American military personnel mocking hooded, naked Iraqi prisoners. These images of those degraded are vile. The smiles of those who would degrade are grotesque.

The soldiers in the photos must not become the face of the American-lead occupation in Iraq or of the American GI.

Sixty years ago at the end of World War II, the American soldier was seen as a smiling supplier of chocolate bars. Our men and women in uniform must not become known around the world for degrading and humiliating unarmed, naked detainees.

□ 1630

I am deeply proud of our military. The vast majority of our men and women in uniform serve with bravery, compassion and honor. Sadly, the barbaric conduct at the Abu Ghraib prison reflects upon all our troops and it is up to all of us, the Congress, the executive branch, the justice system and the military itself to address this blight upon our record. I am glad that several of our senior commanders in Iraq have publicly apologized to the Iraqi people. I also believe that it was important for President Bush to express his personal regret to the Iraqi people and his commitment to a full investigation as he did during two interviews with Arabic language television yesterday.

I have been to Iraq and met with our young men and women who are serving there. The most disturbing aspect of

this reprehensible conduct at the prison is that it undermines and endangers the lives of American soldiers who are diligently working every day in the most difficult conditions. All of the countless acts of good will performed by our soldiers, the rebuilding of hospitals, the opening of schools, the reuniting of families, the building of civic institutions and the foundation of representative government, all of these are undercut by these acts.

Our campaign against terror has also been weakened. The war on terror and the war in Iraq are ultimately wars of ideas. The idea of a civil society under the rule of law, respective of human rights and individual liberties is at war with the idea of a closed society devoid of the right to speak as one chooses, without the free exercise of religion and propagated by indiscriminate and murderous violence against innocent men, women and children. The recent events at Abu Ghraib prison, a place identified with the barbarity of the Saddam Hussein regime, are a major setback in the war of ideas. A key element of this war has been our attempt to convince the Islamic world that America and the West are not out to humiliate and destroy Muslims. The damage to that effort is incalculable and the soldiers who committed these acts have betrayed the bravery, dignity and the sacrifice of their fellow troops.

This resolution is our statement to the world and particularly to Iraq and the Islamic world that the people of the United States are united in their condemnation of the stomach-turning acts of abuse that were perpetrated in our name. But this is only the beginning. We need a thorough investigation to find out both where the breakdown in the chain of command occurred and why Congress was left out of the loop, even though the military has been investigating these incidents for months and the investigation by Major General Antonio Taguba was completed in late February, 2½ months ago. We also need to determine whether the conduct at Abu Ghraib was an isolated set of incidents or whether, as some have suggested, similar acts were committed at other detention facilities in Iraq.

Nearly two centuries ago, Alexis de Toqueville is reputed to have said, "America is great because America is good; if America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great." That was true then. It is still true today. Our greatness has been built upon countless acts of goodness and not even an episode like this can undo that proud history, but it should serve as a reminder that our Nation has succeeded because Americans are strivers. We are always looking to better ourselves, our communities, our country and the community of nations. We now face a great challenge to that perception of goodness and we must all rise to meet that challenge.