

WAR IN IRAQ

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

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for the tone that has been exhibited on the floor of the House. We must be mindful of what we say and what we do, because our children are listening. I am gratified that Members have come to the floor to indicate both their disgust and their rejection of the actions of some in the military in Iraq. But allow me to lay out my reasoning for opposing the resolution on the floor of the House that was supposed to be today a call by this Congress, a bipartisan call by this Congress to investigate those incidences.

First of all, let me say that I follow in the tradition of Hubert Humphrey that says, in paraphrase, that we are the agitators to create a more perfect union. We are always seeking to make America better. We are always seeking to allow America to live up to its very special ideals of democracy and the Declaration of Independence that indicates that we all are created equal with certain inalienable rights of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Those actions in Iraq were not necessarily only those of the perpetrators and actors, but it showed the face of America and the face of our military and it was an unjust face. Martin Luther King reminded us that an injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere. So why do I come to the floor of the House announcing my opposition to the resolution that was on the floor and my "no" vote? Because it was the failure of the Republican leadership that I challenged, failure in betraying the trust of the American people. Those crimes in Iraq were not partisan. They were not Democratic; they were not Republican. They were all of us being shocked and outraged, and collaboratively we should have stood here on the floor of the House in a bipartisan way and laid out a road map for the American people on many instances.

The first one is that it should be a bipartisan, complete and comprehensive investigation. We should investigate whether or not there was a violation of the Geneva Convention for the Committee on International Relations. We should investigate whether JAG officers and others who were interrogating these individuals followed certain rules and certain parameters that would be respectful of the human dignity. I know someone is saying now, look at the tragedies that happened to our civilian hostages and others who we saw glaring across the television screens just a couple of weeks ago. Let me say that we all protested that in outrage. But is it for us to follow suit to those whom we consider uncivilized and to be murderous terrorists? Is that the model that we are to follow? I think not.

And so for this Republican leadership to put on the floor of the House a singular resolution that says that the Secretary of the Army is supposed to investigate this, no Judiciary Committee, no International Relations Committee, no Intelligence Committee, no Government Reform Committee, no committees of jurisdiction, no Homeland Security Committee, when the very fact that the individuals who will face the wrath and the ire of the world will be Americans who are traveling around the world, we must investigate this comprehensively.

Mr. President, I disagree with you. I hope that your apology was forthright in the last hours that I have not been before the television screen. I hope you said something that we could understand. I clearly think that you are to be applauded for going before those in the Arab world. But I think the American people have to understand what happened. I have no apologies for not condemning in totality those men and women who were the perpetrators of, yes, criminal acts and they should be brought to justice. But they did not act alone. The hierarchy, the brass, the individuals who knew about this in November of 2003, who shared it with no one and absolutely no one in America, not even this United States Congress, not the Intelligence Committee.

Where else does the blame lie? Directly at the feet of Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the man who orchestrated this war and suggested to us that weapons of mass destruction were the cause of going to war in Iraq. He misrepresented and misled the American people then and he has hidden the truth from us now. He does not deserve to hold this office. Neither does Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz.

And so I would ask them in a tone that I hope will be respectful, in order to clean the slate and allow America to go forward and to truly have the kind of dignity and respect the United States military deserves, so that we can build again, so that the American people can be known for what they are, compassionate and loving and believers of democracy, so that our children would understand that we too are fighters for democracy, then it is appropriate, Mr. President, that you ask for Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation, along with Paul Wolfowitz'.

This is not a time for loyalty. This is not a time for partisan politics. Mr. Rumsfeld failed you. He was derelict in his duty. He was aware of this and did not share this with the Congress. He knew it on Thursday of last week when "60 Minutes" showed it on television. What an insult. We could have avoided the controversy and the sadness that has permeated our leadership. The American people have put all of us in the same boat, Democrats, Republicans, Congress Members, House Members, Senate Members, administration.

It is interesting. When they were ready to rise up against William Jefferson Clinton in the impeachment over

discretions in his personal life, everybody was speaking about it in the United States. Everybody was outraged. Where is the outrage now? What a shame and a travesty.

And to the American people, I would say you too have a responsibility to ask the hard questions. In these letters to the President, Secretary Rumsfeld and to the Speaker of the House, I have asked for Secretary Rumsfeld's resignation. That is the honorable thing to do. Or be terminated. And I have asked the Speaker to convene a full body before he leaves to tell us the honest truth.

Mr. Speaker, I ask in a tone of simplicity and humbleness, where are the American people? Where are our voices? It is time now to stand for truth and to stand for those troops who are fighting for us all over the world.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, May 6, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER HASTERT: It has become evident that due to the recent abuses of Iraqi soldiers by members of the U.S. military, that the Congress should get involved in calling for an immediate investigation of these atrocities. An investigation led by Major General Antonio Taguba, reported widespread abuses in the detention of Iraqi prisoners including incidents in which detainees were threatened with a pistol and with military dogs, prisoners were being sodomized with a chemical light and broomstick and soldiers were forcing naked prisoners into compromising positions. Members of Congress were never told the true extent of the abuses taking place; instead we were left to find out the truth when it was revealed to the general public. It is inconceivable that Secretary Rumsfeld would leave both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government in the dark regarding a critical foreign policy issue. His actions clearly go against the dictates and procedures of his position as Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Rumsfeld's failures in managing the war in Iraq go beyond the abuses of Iraqi prisoners. It has become clear that he has no control over the thousands of private contractors and private security companies in Iraq. In fact, the Pentagon has no records as to the number of private individuals who are in Iraq working on behalf of the United States Government. In addition to the extreme danger many of these individuals are being placed in, there are numerous reports that many of these individuals are taking part in highly illegal activities. Indeed, privately contracted individuals are suspected as being involved with the abuses that took place in the Abu Ghraib prison. Another disturbing issue that is just now coming to light is that there are currently fourteen different investigations into prisoner deaths that took place in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet another indication that Secretary Rumsfeld has known about the severe mistreatment of prisoners and has failed to act.

The severity of Secretary Rumsfeld's actions pose grave consequences for our Nation. Let me be clear, I have always supported the men and women of our Armed Forces. It is my belief that the abuse of prisoners in Iraq has been the work of a small number of disgraceful American soldiers. However, as the Secretary of Defense, he bears the burden of the actions of the Armed Forces that he was sworn to oversee. The grotesque images of U.S. soldiers abusing

Iraqi prisoners are being shown around the world and no amount of words can change the effect of those images. In the short term our soldiers abroad now face even greater danger in fighting this war. In the long term our Nation now must address the outlook for our war in Iraq that only seems to become more difficult by the day. As the Secretary of Defense, your leadership should help guide our Armed Forces to victory, instead your tenure as Secretary has brought disrepute and a greater burden upon our Nation.

In conclusion, it is absolutely essential that the entire United States Congress get involved in the investigation of these atrocities because it affects each and every one of us as we represent constituents who currently serve in Iraq.

Sincerely,

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2004.

Hon. DONALD RUMSFELD,
Secretary of Defense,
Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY RUMSFELD: I am writing to you today to ask that you resign as Secretary of Defense in light of your actions regarding the abuse of prisoners in Iraq. It has become clear to me and many of my colleagues in Congress that your continued leadership and management of the war in Iraq is no longer in the best interest of our Nation. In my qualified opinion there has been a dereliction of duty on your part as Secretary of Defense and I believe you have an obligation to the American people to resign your office.

As the Secretary of Defense it is your sworn duty and responsibility to oversee and direct the actions of our Nation's Armed Forces. It has become evident that not only have you failed to prevent the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, but in fact you have made a concerted effort to cover up the extent of the abuses taking place. You knew as far back as November 2003 that Iraqi prisoners were being treated in a way that was inhumane and illegal by any standard. Only now more than 6 months later is the truth finally being revealed. An investigation led by Major General Antonio Taguba, reported widespread abuses in the detention of Iraqi prisoners including incidents in which detainees were threatened with a pistol and with military dogs, prisoners were being sodomized with a chemical light and broomstick and soldiers were forcing naked prisoners into compromising positions. This information was known to you long ago and yet the first time that anyone ever heard of these incidents was in the release of the horrific photos taken in the Abu Ghraib prison. Members of Congress were never told the true extent of the abuses taking place; instead we were left to find out the truth when it was revealed to the general public. The most galling indication of this cover up was the fact that even President Bush, our Nation's Commander-in-Chief, first found out about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners while watching national television. This incident shows that you have failed the Commander-in-chief as Secretary of Defense and should relieve yourself of the responsibilities of your office. It is inconceivable that you would leave both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government in the dark regarding a critical foreign policy issue. Your actions clearly go against the dictates and procedures of your position as Secretary of Defense.

Your failures in managing the war in Iraq go beyond the abuses of Iraqi prisoners. It has become clear that you have no control over the thousands of private contractors and private security companies in Iraq. In

fact, the Pentagon has no records as to the number of private individuals who are in Iraq working on behalf of the United States Government. In addition to the extreme danger many of these individuals are being placed in, there are numerous reports that many of these individuals are taking part in highly illegal activities. Indeed, privately contracted individuals are suspected as being involved with the abuses that took place in the Abu Ghraib prison. Another disturbing issue that is just now coming to light is that there are currently fourteen different investigations into prisoner deaths that took place in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet another indication that you have known about the severe mistreatment of prisoners and have failed to act.

I sincerely hope you realize the severity of your actions and the consequences they pose for our Nation. Let me be clear, I have always supported the men and women of our Armed Forces. It is my belief that the abuse of prisoners in Iraq has been the work of a small number of disgraceful American soldiers. However, as the Secretary of Defense you bear the burden of the actions of the Armed Forces that you were sworn to oversee. The grotesque images of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners are being shown around the world and no amount of words can change the effect of those images. In the short term our soldiers abroad now face even greater danger in fighting this war. In the long term our Nation now must address the outlook for our war in Iraq that only seems to become more difficult by the day. As the Secretary of Defense your leadership should help guide our Armed Forces to victory, instead your tenure as Secretary has brought disrepute and a greater burden upon our Nation.

I am asking that for the sake of our Nation you resign immediately as the Secretary of Defense. The men and women of our Armed Forces, our Nation, and indeed the world deserve to know that there is accountability for failure and reckless conduct from America's leaders. I hope you will take my words to heart and resign your office for the good of our Nation.

Sincerely,

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE,
Member of Congress.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 6, 2004.

President GEORGE W. BUSH,
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW,
Washington, DC.

DEAR PRESIDENT BUSH: I am writing to you today to ask that you call for the resignation or terminate Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense in light of his actions regarding the abuse of prisoners in Iraq. It has become clear to me and many of my colleagues in Congress that his continued leadership and management of the war in Iraq is no longer in the best interest of our nation. In my qualified opinion there has been a dereliction of duty on the part of Secretary Rumsfeld and as Commander-in-Chief I believe you have an obligation to the American people to remove him from office.

As the Secretary of Defense it is Secretary Rumsfeld's sworn duty and responsibility to oversee and direct the actions of our nation's Armed Forces. It has become evident that not only has he failed to prevent the abuse of Iraqi prisoners, but in fact he has made a concerted effort to cover up the extent of the abuses taking place. He knew as far back as November of 2003 that Iraqi prisoners were being treated in a way that was inhumane and illegal by any standard. Only now more than six months later is the truth finally being revealed. An investigation led by Major General Antonio Taguba, reported

widespread abuses in the detention of Iraqi prisoners including incidents in which detainees were threatened with a pistol and with military dogs, prisoners were being sodomized with a chemical light and broomstick and soldiers were forcing naked prisoners into compromising positions. This information was known to Secretary Rumsfeld long ago and yet the first time that anyone ever heard of these incidents was in the release of the horrific photos taken in the Abu Ghraib prison. Members of Congress were never told the true extent of the abuses taking place; instead we were left to find out the truth when it was revealed to the general public. The most galling indication of this cover up was the fact that you yourself, our nation's Commander-in-Chief, first found out about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners while watching national television. It is clear that the Secretary of Defense has failed the Commander-in-Chief and now decisive action must be taken to remove him from his office. It is inconceivable that Secretary Rumsfeld would leave both the Executive and Legislative branches of our government in the dark regarding a critical foreign policy issue. His actions clearly go against the dictates and procedures of his position as Secretary of Defense.

Secretary Rumsfeld's failures in managing the war in Iraq go beyond the abuses of Iraqi prisoners. It has become clear that he has no control over the thousands of private contractors and private security companies in Iraq. In fact, the Pentagon has no records as to the number of private individuals who are in Iraq working on behalf of the United States Government. In addition to the extreme danger many of these individuals are being placed in, there are numerous reports that many of these individuals as taking part in highly illegal activities. Indeed, privately contracted individuals are suspected as being involved with the abuses that took place in the Abu Ghraib prison. Another disturbing issue that is just now coming to light is that there are currently fourteen different investigations into prisoner deaths that took place in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet another indication that Secretary Rumsfeld has known about the severe mistreatment of prisoners and has failed to act.

The severity of Secretary Rumsfeld's actions pose grave consequences for our nation. Let me be clear, I have always supported the men and women of our Armed Forces. It is my belief that the abuse of prisoners in Iraq has been the work of a small number of disgraceful American soldiers. However, as the Secretary of Defense he bears the burden of the actions of the Armed Forces that he was sworn to oversee. The grotesque images of U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners are being shown around the world and no amount of words can change the effect of those images. In the short term our soldiers abroad now face even greater danger in fighting this war. In the long term our nation now must address the outlook for our war in Iraq that only seems to become more difficult by the day. As the Secretary of Defense his leadership should help guide our Armed Forces to victory, instead his tenure as Secretary has brought disrepute and a greater burden upon our nation.

I am asking that for the sake of our nation you ask for the resignation or terminate immediately Secretary Rumsfeld as the Secretary of Defense. The men and women of our Armed Forces, our nation, and indeed the world deserve to know that there is accountability for failure and reckless conduct from America's leaders. I hope you will take my words to heart and remove Secretary

Rumsfeld from office for the good of our nation.

Sincerely,

SHEILA JACKSON-LEE,
Member of Congress.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

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

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Mr. Speaker, with Mother's Day quickly approaching, I want to first thank all of the mothers and wish them a happy Mother's Day and thank them for what they do to make America the great place that it is. I want to thank in particular the American gold star mothers for their sacrifice and for the sacrifice of their children by answering the call of duty to their country.

Let me be clear: I support our troops 100 percent. I would like to honor our brave troops, all the military families and all that they do and have sacrificed for our Nation. I want to emphasize that I do not want our troops to be the scapegoats for this administration's failed policies. What is going on in Iraq right now is just another example of this failed administration policy.

And where is the leadership on this? Where is the President? This administration is once again missing in action. MIA. At this exact moment, with all of the uprising in Iraq, our troops are being placed in the most dangerous position. And although I pledge to do everything within my power as an elected official to ensure that our servicemen and women have the equipment and resources they need to carry out their mission, I find it disturbing, in fact, misleading that President Bush continues to hide the truth about Iraq from the American people.

In fact, up until yesterday, the administration was saying that another supplemental appropriation request would be unnecessary until after, by the way, November elections. To me, however, it seemed more than likely that this administration knew all along that they were going to need additional funding. Unfortunately, this new request of \$25 billion in supplemental spending for Iraq is just another example of the administration's pattern of covering up the facts and refusing to share information with the American people. Although the American public demands to know the truth about the cost of the war, time and time again the administration has denied them the opportunity to get the full story. Moreover, the Republican leadership in Congress refuses to fulfill its constitutional obligation to act as a check and balance on the executive branch.

With this \$25 billion, our country's taxpayers will be forced to spend over \$200 billion for this war. How much more will we need in the future? No one knows because the administration does not tell us anything. I would like

to say contrary to the administration's talk about how they pass measures like this to provide for the troops, in the last \$87 billion supplemental, the Bush administration never even requested sufficient funds for body armor, Humvees, and dozens of other badly needed supplies that the troops need over there for their survival. These items were only included in the package because it was stuck in in this Congress. Not this administration. The Congress put those supplies in for the troops.

In closing, we need to be included in the strategy. The President is asking for another \$25 billion. What I am requesting from them is some transparency. I am requesting a broader, inclusive strategy. We are three branches of government, not a dictatorship. America needs a plan for Iraq, Mr. President, one that does not involve hundreds more American troops going home in body bags.

In November, the American people will have their say. Do not forget the 2000 election because it does matter who is in charge.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. I yield to the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. I thank the gentlewoman for what she has said. I want to join her in her salute to mothers with a happy Mother's Day, but also let me say that my heart goes out to mothers who have lost children in the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. I thank the gentlewoman for acknowledging them. I acknowledge my mom, Ivalita Jackson, at this time. I thank the gentlewoman so much and happy Mother's Day to her.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida. Happy Mother's Day to all of the mothers.

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CALLING FOR RESIGNATION OF SECRETARY RUMSFELD

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

Mr. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to address the U.S. House of Representatives this evening and also the American people.

This hour every week the Congressional Black Caucus comes together to speak to the people of the United States about issues that are facing our country, how we can play offense in certain areas to make sure that we stay a vital and sovereign country. But today I must say it is a very difficult day to stand here in this House of Representatives and be able to share with the American people that we have grave issues with the leadership of the Bush administration as it relates to the handling of what has happened to Iraqi prisoners in our custody.

It is appropriate to say there will be investigations that will be conducted. It is appropriate to say that there are future courts martial that will take place and individuals will pay on the front line; but it is very difficult for us to continue, and when I say us, I would mainly want to say the majority party of this House, and for the majority leaders of this House to look in the face of something very wrong, very much mishandled in this country as it relates to the abuse of these prisoners.

I will say this is a very emotional thing for me due to the fact that I have had more than four people in my district die in Iraq. Yes, I commend the troops for their service. Yes, every day on the Committee on Armed Services I make sure that we do what we have to do to make sure that they have the equipment that they need to protect themselves, to make sure that Reservists that signed up to defend their country if need be, that they are able to make ends meet.

We commend our troops every day. We appreciate their patriotism. We have over 120,000 troops in the Middle East, not even counting the individuals that are providing civilian services and contract services throughout the world.

But I must say that Secretary Rumsfeld, with him having the number one job at the Pentagon and being the Secretary, should resign from the Department of Defense. The reason we are calling for his resignation is not because he happens to be a part of the Republican administration or we disagree with Secretary Rumsfeld with his strategy towards the war. It is to save American lives. It is just that simple.

American troops will be terrorized even more now in the Middle East than they have been over recent weeks and days due to the fact of the humiliation of Iraqis and pictures that we will never live down. The Iraqi people will never live it down, the Arab world will never live it down because their pictures are all over the Internet, The Washington Post, CNN, any network Web site. You can definitely pick them up by just picking up the New York Times. The Washington Post today has a picture of one of our soldiers with an Iraqi prisoner on a dog chain.

We all condemn these acts. There is nothing wrong with condemning them, but there is something fundamentally wrong for the President of the United States not to be able to say, I am sorry or someone in my administration, or I was wrong. I will share with you as a Member of Congress and somebody who has been elected for 10 years, there are days I have to admit that I am wrong. There are days that publicly I have to say that I made a mistake. There are certainly days I have to say I am sorry, to not even my constituents when I make a mistake, but also to the American people.

But I will say, this is not the time to shield the administration, the majority