

"I'm not sure it is a large number when you look at it in the big scheme of things," Boylan said. "The thing that concerns me is people equating success or failure with the number. The first casualty to the last casualty, whenever that will be, is just as important and shouldn't be pegged to numbers."

The latest deaths include four soldiers killed Tuesday in Baghdad and a soldier who died Tuesday from injuries received from a roadside bomb attack Monday on a convoy in Baghdad. On Monday, the deadliest day for U.S. forces in four months, seven Marines were killed in a massive car bombing on the outskirts of Fallujah, a notorious hotspot of anti-U.S. sentiment about 40 miles west of Baghdad. Three soldiers also were killed in Baghdad and elsewhere. The approximately 140,000 U.S. service members in Iraq are deployed across a vast region stretching from Iraq's northern border with Turkey, Syria and Iran, through the country's middle and into its southern provinces. The rest of southern Iraq is the responsibility of coalition forces led by Britain and Poland.

The coalition's mission is to support the fledgling interim Iraqi government's efforts to prepare the country for nationwide parliamentary elections by Jan. 31, including establishing law and order. Boylan said U.S. military leaders have acknowledged that the insurgency is making their job difficult.

"It may not happen as fast as everybody would like," Boylan said. "It's hard work, especially when there are groups of people who don't want you in their area, for whatever reason."

Multinational soldiers were attacked about 2,000 times in August, or an average of 67 times daily, a record since the April 2003 fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, a military spokesman said this week. In July, the coalition was attacked about 1,000 times, or an average of 37 times daily.

Mortar rounds rain on military bases. Improvised explosive devices and car bombs blow apart military convoys. Gunmen armed with assault rifles, sniper rifles and rocket-propelled grenades prey on Marines and soldiers patrolling in armored vehicles or on foot. "It kind of runs the whole gamut," Boylan said of the perils facing U.S. forces. "There's still an active threat. We have to guard against that every day."

Soldiers such as Army Staff Sgt. Mathew Barker, whose 1st Cavalry company is stationed in an Iraqi National Guard building in northern Baghdad barricaded behind razor wire and earthen barriers, remain alert to the threats but try not to let the danger impede their mission.

"If you spend every waking moment worrying about what's going to happen, it isn't going to do you any good," Barker said. "Unfortunately, due to the nature of the operation—guerrilla-style tactics—you're going to have casualties. But we have a mission to accomplish." The number of organized, "full-time" insurgents is hard to quantify but is believed to be between 4,000 and 6,000, Boylan said. Also, there are an unknown number of individuals occasionally participating in insurgent activities, sometimes for money, he said.

Other reported estimates, including from U.S. military sources speaking on condition of anonymity, have put the insurgency's size as high as 20,000.

Much of the danger to U.S. forces continues to be within, and emanate from, the so-called Sunni Triangle. The region north and west of Baghdad and bounded by the predominantly Sunni Muslim cities of Tikrit, Ramadi and Baquouba is an insurgent stronghold.

So hostile are certain areas that the military has designated some cities—including

Fallujah, Ramadi and Samarra in the Sunni Triangle and the southern cities of Kufa and Latifiya—"no-go zones." Yet, Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz said this week that U.S. forces might seek to gain control of Fallujah before next year's parliamentary election.

Such a move could add significantly to the number of U.S. casualties.

Barker, the 1st Cavalry soldier in Baghdad, looks on the casualty count with a certain degree of stoicism. "We're Army. This is our job. This is what we signed up to do," he said.

Yet he and his fellow soldiers also are keenly aware of the mounting death toll. Reading the Army's newspaper, Stars and Stripes, they can't ignore the rising number and the names of their fallen comrades-in-arms.

"Yes, it's a low figure compared to how many people have been here," Barker said. "But one death is more than enough."

Later this month I will begin a Special Order on the anniversary of September 11 that addresses the root causes of terrorism and where the rising antagonism against the United States and the West emanates from. For until we address the root causes of the hate, we cannot possibly contain the rising insurgency that cuts across borders, Nations and cultures, and our soldiers are paying the largest price for this.

Tonight we wish to thank those men and women serving our Nation through the military, whose mission is extraordinarily difficult and whose patriotism is at the highest levels, and they deserve our highest esteem and appreciation.

ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN EXTENSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa). 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, first of all, let me rise to acknowledge and offer my personal sympathy to the many, many families in this country who since we have been on the work recess have lost their loved ones in Iraq and Afghanistan. I think it is important as we proceed in what is going to be probably a very vigorous and adversarial 6 to 8 weeks of legislative business to let all Americans know that those of us who have vigorously opposed the policies of an undefined war and lack of an exit strategy no less have the greatest amount of respect and sympathy for those who are willing to give the ultimate sacrifice.

In the last 48 hours, we lost 7 marines in the tragedy of a car bomb in Iraq. So I wanted to make clear, as I proceed and will be debating these questions of the 9/11 Commission, how important it is to reflect upon those servants who have given their lives.

I also want to mention this evening, Mr. Speaker, the importance of the next couple of weeks and days and to focus tonight on what I think is the week's outrage.

Six days from now on September 13, 2004, this Congress and this President

will allow the assault weapons ban to expire. I think that if we were to think with a deal of consciousness and be reflective, people of reason would ask the question, why.

Why, when the assault weapons ban has seen a 60 percent decrease in the use of assault weapons in crime; why, when we have seen a decrease in the number of school shootings we had just 4 or 5 years ago, when children were being shot by automatic weapons; why, in the backdrop of an automatic weapon shooting today, why would you imagine that the Republican leadership of the House and Senate refuse to do what is right? When our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan cannot even get flak jackets to protect them against bullets, why would we want to have in the United States of America the idea of war weaponry on the street?

Is the Speaker aware that the gun companies are now taking people's credit cards over the Internet so that on the sunset of September 13 they can simply ship these guns out en masse?

Why is democracy being denied in the very place that democracy is supposed to be enhanced? Why are we refusing to allow a vigorous and fair debate on the question of whether or not the assault weapons ban should continue? Why are we being denied the very privilege of having this legislative initiative being placed on the floor of the House and Senate simply to allow those who have differing opinions, who represent millions and millions of Americans who have pleaded with their legislators to again enact the assault weapons ban, why is the leadership refusing to acknowledge this legislative initiative?

Why is the President of the United States, who has indicated his consent and approval of the assault weapons ban, not lifting a single finger? Is this what my colleagues call flip-flop? Is this what my colleagues call indecisiveness? Is this what my colleagues call saying one thing and doing another?

It seems very clear to me. It is a tragedy. Whose child will be next that will be shot by an assault weapon? Whose employee is next? Whose employer is next; what law enforcement officer, what first responder, whom we pretend to be so supportive of, when most of the law enforcement agencies in America have asked us to extend the assault weapons ban?

This is an absurdity, this is an outrage, and we will continue to be on the floor every single day to shed the light of day, to pull the covers back to let everybody know the masquerading that is going on here in Washington, the flip-flopping, the outrage of deceit by suggesting that there is some support for the assault weapons ban, and yet the leadership of this House, dominated by the Republicans, and the Senate, refuse to allow us to have a simple debate on this question.

I believe in life over death and peace over war, and I see no conflict in the

second amendment in the constitutional right to bear arms with any desire and need to carry an automatic weapon. I would support my law enforcement officers, the peace of our community and peace of this Nation over any gun manufacturer any day. Come out and show yourself. We are the truthsayers in the place. I ask for a debate on the assault weapons ban, and I ask for it to be extended.

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

(Mr. STRICKLAND 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 Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

WHY THE CAPITAL LOOKS LIKE A BEWILDERED CITY UNDER ATTACK

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

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thought I ought to come to the House floor this evening to explain my understanding of why the capital looks like a bewildered city under attack. The Members have not seen the worst of it yet because we have not all come to the House during rush hour or left the House during rush hour.

The District was put under an orange alert while Members were away. I am fully appreciative of the reasons for the orange alert after the IMF and World Bank were seen as targeted places. I am a member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security. I believe strong action was necessary. What we see around the House and the Senate are the primitive protections, if we can call them that.

Checkpoints, a street closure of the only street for all intents and purposes leaving from this part of the city to the transportation hub of the region, Union Station, rail, light rail, buses, Metro, this is what you would expect if we were under attack. If you get a red alert, there is nothing more to do. So we have to ask ourselves, was this necessary, was there an alternative?

Let me be clear, New York has been under an orange alert since 9/11. While very special precautions were taken during the Republican convention, and I would hope so, no major street in New York City has been closed to traffic.

During the recess I had meetings with all the security officials, Mr. Livingood, Mr. Pickle, Chief Gainer, to ask what was going on and to see

whether or not we could offer some alternatives. With me also was the administrator of the District of Columbia representing the Mayor of the District of Columbia.

The first thing I asked was, do we have a citywide plan, a coordinated, citywide security plan to protect the Nation's Capital. Astonishingly, we do not. Each sector operates on its own. The Capitol Police here in the House and the Senate, that is one sector. The White House sector, through the Secret Service, the Federal agencies, that is another sector. Finally, the Metropolitan Police Department, on whom all are dependent, no coordinated plan. So on 15th Street, right by Treasury and the White House, no security checkpoints, no street closures, because the Secret Service made a calculated, analytical decision that you did not need it, that the risk was not such that you needed to close whole streets or even use checkpoints. Why are we having checkpoints here?

I believe that Mr. Livingood and the Capitol Police will shortly be forced to do the sensible thing, not to abolish the necessary checkpoints, but to look at what they say are the vehicles that concern them, larger vehicles like limousines, like SUVs, but they are peering into each and every car so that there is going to be traffic, as the Mayor says, all the way to Delaware. It is all the way, all the way to Maryland. Mind you, the entire region is going to be affected. Many people are avoiding the area so they are clogging up 395 and downtown.

The gentleman from Ohio (Chairman NEY) and I have spoken. He believed on his own motion that there needed to be a citywide coordinated plan. He has said he wishes to have a task force with all of the players at the table. That is the only way we are really going to be secure.

We have submitted alternatives that came out of these meetings, checkpoints of the kind I just described where you, in fact, let most cars go by, but you do, in fact, stop those of a particular size. Open First Street. We have an alternative. Use checkpoints on First Street. Then narrow First Street with barricades so that cars can only go to and fro after being checkpointed. There is no way in which that does not provide the kind of protection that is needed for Dirksen and Russell, which are on each side.

Above all, let us get down to technology. They used some low technology for the first time, tested some low technology for the first time after the orange alert that had to do with manipulation of traffic lights.

I am asking Members to call my office, to let me know what their experience has been with the checkpoints and with the closure of First Street. Some of you are going to be absolutely exasperated. There are over 20,000 employees, 440 Members of the House, 100 Members of the Senate, but I need your feedback as we try to find new ways.

At the moment we are dealing with 19th century ways to protect the Nation's Capital. They would have used checkpoints and barricades 100 years ago. I think we can do better than that. We do not want the people's House and the Senate to look like an armed camp. We must protect this place not only symbolically, but because this is where the greatest government in the world is, and this is where 600,000 people live.

We have all of the resources that come with innovation because we are Americans. That spirit of innovation is not being shown around this Capitol. I need Members to come forward. Let me know what is happening so that we can compel improvements and make this House and the Senate look like the people's Congress again.

□ 2100

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. KING of Iowa) laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 7, 2004.

Hon. J. DENNIS HASTERT,
The Speaker, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, I have the honor to transmit a sealed envelope received from the White House on September 7, 2004 at 4:50 p.m. and said to contain a message from the President whereby he transmits a copy of a Proclamation he has issued entitled, "To Modify the Generalized System of Preferences and for Other Purposes".

With best wishes, I am
Sincerely,

JEFF TRANDAHLL,
Clerk of the House.

TO MODIFY THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (H. DOC. NO. 108-211)

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following message from the President of the United States; which was read and, together with the accompanying papers, without objection, referred to the Committee on Ways and Means and ordered to be printed:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act"), I am writing to inform you of my intent to designate Iraq as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).

I have considered the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the 1974 Act. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend GSP benefits to Iraq.

GEORGE W. BUSH,
THE WHITE HOUSE, September 7, 2004.