

During a press conference in the Rose Garden President Bush claimed that “these have been months of steady progress.” And in this House chamber last week Prime Minister Allawi echoed the President, reminding my colleagues “not to forget the progress we are making in Iraq.”

President Bush and Prime Minister Allawi can say we are making progress in Iraq, but the facts simply do not support their claims. Attacks against Iraqis and U.S. military personnel over the last couple of weeks are dramatically higher than they were in the weeks after the handover of power to the interim Iraqi government. Today on average 70 attacks occur on a daily basis, compared to 40 to 50 in July. Over the past 2 weeks these attacks have killed more than 250 Iraqis and 29 U.S. military personnel. How in the world is that progress, Madam Speaker?

President Bush also ignores the real dangers surrounding the scheduled Iraqi elections in January. At his press conference last week, the President said the elections are still possible based on the situation on the ground. His reason is “because the Prime Minister told me they are.”

Well, neither the President nor the Prime Minister could provide any evidence to support their steadfast belief that the January elections must proceed despite the realities on the ground.

That same day, Iraq’s most powerful Shiite leader threatened to withdraw his support for the elections. And UN Secretary General Annan also voiced concern that elections may need to be delayed due to security concerns on the ground.

Madam Speaker, even President Bush’s cabinet is providing contradictory information regarding the January elections. Last week at a Senate hearing, Defense Secretary Rumsfeld raised the possibility that some areas of Iraq might be excluded from voting in January. Secretary Rumsfeld said, “Let’s say you tried to have an election and you could have it in three-quarters or four-fifths of the country, but in some places you couldn’t because the violence was too great. Well, so be it. Nothing’s perfect in life.”

That is what Rumsfeld said. Image that.

How could Secretary Rumsfeld conclude that the Iraqi people would consider such an election legitimate if a significant portion of the Iraqi people were not allowed to participate?

Fortunately, there has one member of the President’s Cabinet that is not afraid to put aside the President’s talking points and speak the truth. This weekend, Secretary of State Powell refuted the President’s claims that progress is being made in Iraq. Not only did Secretary Powell say the insurgency in Iraq is getting worse, he also supported Senator KERRY’s contentions that the U.S. occupation of Iraq has increased anti-American sentiment in Muslim countries.

Secretary Powell also refuted Secretary Rumsfeld’s outrageous statements about the January election. What Powell said is, “For the elections to have complete credibility and stand the test of international scrutiny, I think what we have to do is to give all the people of Iraq an opportunity to participate.”

Now, I obviously agree with what Secretary Powell says, but it is no wonder the situation in Iraq is so tenable. We have a President who either refuses to believe there is a problem in Iraq or does not think it is a problem to mislead the American people about how serious the situation currently is.

We also have an administration that never seems to be on the same page. One cabinet official is saying one thing while another one is saying just the opposite.

So, Madam Speaker, this is no way to lead a war, clearly. It is a flawed rationale for the war to begin with, in failing to have a plan once Baghdad fell, and President Bush’s record essentially has not been good. It has been a failure.

He failed to provide the troops with the equipment they needed, and he also failed to implement his reconstruction plans in Iraq, and he has left, essentially, Iraq in chaos. I do not think the world can afford another four years of this failed leadership on behalf of the Bush administration.

HONORING IRVING HARRIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Ms. DELAURO. Madam Speaker, I rise to honor the extraordinary legacy of a dear friend who passed away this past week. An advocate, philanthropist and leading voice for children, Irving Harris left an indelible mark on our society.

Recognizing early on that the key to children’s success lay in their most formative years, birth through three. Inspiring, developing and supporting scores of programs and organizations dedicated to improving the lives of disadvantaged youngsters across the Nation, he founded the Erickson Institute, a child development graduate school and the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a public-private partnership that created and promoted community-based initiatives to improve early childhood development.

He also helped create and fund the Yale Child Study Center which is nationally recognized as leaders in the field of children’s trauma, addressing those children who have been exposed to violence.

Irving was also a leader in the development of Zero to Three, the national center for infants, toddlers, and families, whose work to support families and promote the healthy development

of babies and toddlers had a tremendous impact in communities across the Nation.

Irving’s work rightly brought him national recognition as a leading voice for children across the country.

Irving Harris was one of those rare individuals with roots in the world of business and finance, who used his hard-won wealth and influence to help others less fortunate. His work and his diligence and dedication was not only remarkable but it was unceasing, a reflection of all that we strive to be. His sincerity was marked by the principles he instilled in his own family, in his children and grandchildren who today carry on his work on behalf of the other children of America.

Through education, public policy development, grant making and advocacy, Irving Harris’ vision and leadership earned him recognition and many honors and awards over the years. He served many organizations, including the National Commission on Children and the Carnegie Corporations’ New York task force on meeting the needs of young children.

It was for me personally an enormous privilege to work with Irving Harris over the years, and working now with his son, Bill, and with his grandson, David. Irving Harris knew that our young people represent the future and that we as a community and a Nation must give them the tools that they need in order to succeed. He recognized this simple fact many years ago and dedicated his life to fulfilling that important goal.

I say today, thank you, Irving, for the difference that you have made in this country, and the millions of lives that you have made better through your vision, your passion, and your generous spirit of mind. You have been an inspiration to all of us.

Today my thoughts and my prayers and love are with the Harris family.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 2 p.m.

Accordingly (at 1 o’clock and 6 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess until 2 p.m.

□ 1400

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ISSA) at 2 p.m.

PRAYER

The Rev. Thomas K. Spence, Jr., Retired Pastor, Presbyterian Church, Sanford, North Carolina, offered the following prayer:

What do You require from us, O Lord? Is it not to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with

You? Show us what justice and kindness mean in a broken and troubled world, where hunger, violence, and oppression are so pervasive. Teach us what it means to be humble in a world where we take ourselves too seriously and where wisdom and truth are often scorned.

You gave these men and women such noble intentions when they first took the oath of office. Put it into their hearts to be more than good Republicans and good Democrats, O Lord. Let them be lovers of justice and peace. Do not let them become weary in well doing. Renew their strength when they labor long hours. Lift their hearts when they are discouraged. When their vision fails, keep before them the ideals that have made us a great Nation. Let them be faithful and steadfast in all their labors, that Your benediction may rest upon them all. We pray in the name of all that is holy. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. ETHERIDGE led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendment in which the concurrence of the House is requested, bills of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 4818. An act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4818) "An act making appropriations for foreign operations, export financing, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. SPECTER, Mr. GREGG, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. BENNETT, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. BOND, Mr. DEWINE, Mr. STEVENS, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. INOUE, Mr. HARKIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. BYRD, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

H.R. 4850. An act making appropriations for the government of the District of Colum-

bia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate insists upon its amendment to the bill (H.R. 4850) "An act making appropriations for the government of the District of Columbia and other activities chargeable in whole or in part against the revenues of said District for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2005, and for other purposes," requests a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon, and appoints Mr. DEWINE, Mrs. HUTCHISON, Mr. BROWNBAC, Mr. STEVENS, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. INOUE, to be the conferees on the part of the Senate.

WELCOMING THE REV. THOMAS K. SPENCE, JR.

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with great pride to introduce and present to this august body the Reverend Thomas Spence as today's Guest Chaplain in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Reverend Spence is the pastor of Leaflet Presbyterian Church, my home church in Broadway, North Carolina; and I am honored he has been with us today in the people's House. Reverend Spence possesses rare eloquence; and as a long-time congregant and friend, I can tell Members he is a unique individual whose interest and activism stretches far more broadly than his congregation. He has truly lived a life according to Jesus' example to tend to the least among us.

Like me, Reverend Spence grew up on a farm in rural North Carolina, he in Harnett County; and I grew up in the adjacent county of Johnston. The life lessons one learns growing up on a working farm shape your world view and instill what we refer to as good North Carolina values of hard work, faith in God, love of family and friends, and devotion to duty to those around us and to our world as a whole. Reverend Spence has lived North Carolina values every day of his life and has served the people of his congregation with great distinction and accomplishment. I am pleased, proud, and honored to introduce North Carolina's own Reverend Thomas Spence to the House.

BIDDING FAREWELL TO AMBASSADOR JAZAIRY

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise today to share with my colleagues that Ambassador Idriss Jazairy of Algeria will be leaving us soon at the end of a very successful tour of duty in the United States.

It has been a privilege working with this gentleman as Algeria's ambassador to the United States for the past 4 years. His eloquent professionalism, great confidence, and his deep care for his family and country have all been reflected in his life and service here.

Ambassador Jazairy is a true diplomat. He builds bridges and facilitates reconciliation. He has been an eloquent spokesman for his country and the causes of peace and goodwill in the world. He, indeed, is what one would call a peacemaker. He represents his nation's interests with great dignity and has been a wonderful man to work with and call a friend. We will miss him.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the ambassador the very best as he begins his new tour of duty in Geneva as an ambassador to the United Nations, and hope our paths will cross soon.

REMEMBERING NEW MEXICO'S WAR DEAD

(Mr. UDALL of New Mexico asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the men from New Mexico who have died in Iraq. Five New Mexicans and more than 1,000 American military servicemen and -women have made the supreme sacrifice for their Nation on the battlefields of Iraq.

The five are Lance Corporal Christopher Ramos of Albuquerque; Sergeant Moses Rocha of Roswell; Sergeant Lee Duane Todacheene of Farmington; Specialist James H. Pirtle of La Mesa; and Sergeant Tommy L. Gray of Roswell. All five have been part of the ultimate sacrifice.

No words can ever express adequately the gratitude and reverence that Americans feel for these men. Nor can we ever repay the debt incurred to them and their families, whose anguish can only inadequately be tempered by a grateful Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering that five New Mexicans and more than 1,000 fellow Americans stood and fell for all of us. My prayers go out to the families of these fallen heroes, and I hope they know this country honors their sacrifices and recognizes their passing.

APPLAUDING CONGRESSIONAL CONFERENCE ON CIVIC EDUCATION

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, it is vitally important that our children have an understanding of the fundamental principles and values of our constitutional democracy.

Last September, the first annual Congressional Conference on Civic Education was held. The conference was