

tremendous asset it is to the Senate and Nation to have his expertise and experience. The fact that he served at the Pentagon, and has participated in this bill through numerous administrations gives us confidence in this work product.

It has been said that the key to leadership is maintaining order in the midst of change, and change in the midst of order. With the distinguished Chairman, we have that balance.

Mr. President, for a moment, I want to discuss recent developments in Iraq.

You would never try to time a foot race with a sun dial. Likewise, it makes no sense to judge the progress of the war in Iraq by the top of the hour news.

We are at war. That is a sentence fraught with meaning. War is by definition unpredictable. It involves a struggle against a dedicated foe, and constantly shifting conditions. Depending on your point of view, a single event for one part will be an "ebb", while for another it is a "flow." With a short term perspective, you never know whether something is a trend or an isolated, irrelevant occurrence.

One of the lessons we learned from the Vietnam era is that when the United States of America commits troops to battle, we should only do so if we are committed and confident of victory. The angst of so many Vietnam veterans is not the sacrifice they were called to make, but the betrayal of their cause and the anger of the American people at them for doing what their country asked them to do.

The decision to go to war in Iraq was not a snap judgment. It was thoroughly debated here on this floor. The vote to authorize the use of force was not unanimous, but it was bipartisan. We crossed a threshold when we made that decision, and when combat began.

A decision to go to war is not a stock you buy or sell depending on how it is doing. We are in this war until we finish it successfully.

Is there room for debate on how the war is to be conducted? Certainly. But only to a point. We don't need 535 commanders in chief.

In a world of instantaneous global communication, we need to be very sensitive to what we say on the public record, and how our words can be interpreted by those who wish to destroy us. War is a matter of armaments and troops and battle plans. But is also a matter of psychology and spirit. We should be very careful not to encourage our enemies. When Congressman MURTHA made his comments last week, I vehemently disagreed with them. This war is certainly "winnable" but if insurgents heard his words, it was harder to win than before he spoke.

I reiterate that it would be foolish to try to run this war based on public opinion. We have no General Gallup Poll. The circumstances we have learned about Abu Ghraib are very disturbing to us all. Looking at the polls, it had a short term effect on support

for the war effort. But we must maintain the perspective that these are actions we are ashamed of and are working to prevent from ever re-occurring. Compare that to the villains who beheaded Mr. Berg. They reveled in the act of his murder. It was a picture of what we are there to fight against.

Progress is being made. The influential Shia cleric Al-Sistani has called for people like Al Sadr to lay down their arms.

The President has made it clear what to expect as the June 30 deadline approaches. Terrorists like Al Zarqawi know what the prospect of a free Iraq means, and they will do anything to stop it. We cannot let them succeed. We need to be more committed to our noble ideals than the terrorists are to their evil plans. Despite all the attempts to distract us or deter us, we need to stay focused on the transition to Iraqi sovereignty. If we fail, the fall out will be far worse than that from an artillery shell filled with sarin gas.

Mr. President, our history tells us that war is hell. But it also tells us that there are some things worth fighting for.

The battle is engaged. The war on terrorism is being fought in Baghdad, in the Sunni Triangle, not here. Better to fight the battle there than here. Have no doubt, if we were not fighting it there, it would be fought right here. Its poison and death would spew forth upon us.

Removing Saddam Hussein from the world stage was worth fighting for. Freeing the people of Iraq from tyranny and deprivation is worth fighting for. Planting an Arab democracy in the Middle East is an historic opportunity for freedom in this world.

We are committed, Mr. President. Our only option is to persevere to victory. With all people, I hope and pray it will be soon.

I thank the committee for the bill they have brought here to the Senate floor to give the President the tools he needs to protect our security. I look forward to our consideration and passage of it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

THE COMMANDER'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROGRAM

Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, I come to the floor of the Senate today to share with my colleagues and the American people a genuine success story coming out of Iraq. It is a story that demonstrates how American ingenuity, coupled with common sense and commitment, is leading to immediate, visible and valuable improvements in the lives of the Iraqi people.

I am speaking of the Commander's Emergency Response Program. This is a program that allows our troops on the ground to fund low-cost, high-impact humanitarian and small reconstruction projects that benefit the quality of life of the Iraqi people and

contribute to our country's stabilization efforts in Iraq.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program, or CERP, is a program that has generated significant success and one that deserves to be told and told and told.

With the wave of bad news coming out of Iraq in recent weeks, it is easy to lose sight of the progress we have made in that country and of the many accomplishments our Armed Forces have already reached.

Our men and women in uniform have performed magnificently, and the Commander's Emergency Response Program gives them a tool to fund small-scale projects that have an immediate, visible, and high-value impact on the lives of the Iraqi people. We are literally talking about repairing homes, painting schools, restocking hospitals, and restoring freshwater supplies to villages. No project is too small; no task is too trivial.

To date, our commanders on the ground have spent over \$250 million through the Commander's Emergency Response Program, funding over 21,000 projects at an average cost of less than \$7,000. That is right, \$7,000.

Our local commanders have used the CERP to reopen hospitals and clinics all across Iraq to administer over 22 million vaccinations. They have distributed new textbooks to 5.9 million students who are attending school, some for the first time. Our commanders have funded over 1,000 water and sewer projects, bringing clean water to farmers and to villages.

In Rutba, CERP funds were used for electrical and plumbing repairs to the local youth center. The repairs, which cost less than \$9,000, were completed within 10 days.

In Baghdad, the 30th Medical Brigade used the CERP funds to purchase inspection equipment for seven slaughterhouses.

The list of small, yet meaningful, projects could go on and on. Most importantly, the CERP lets our troops act quickly without becoming entangled in redtape or bureaucracy.

Individually, these small-scale projects contribute to the improvement in the daily lives of Iraqi citizens step by step. Collectively, these thousands of projects become something larger, like pieces of a puzzle that join together to reveal a larger picture—a good picture.

Collectively, these projects illustrate the concern of the U.S. military for the Iraqi people, the commitment that our men and women in uniform bring to improving the lives of Iraqis every single day, and the creativity in our approach to ensuring security and stability in Iraq.

We do not read much about these kinds of activities, but collectively these projects give our troops on the ground an opportunity to reach out to Iraqi citizens and to build a bond of mutual trust and good will.

BG David Blackledge, the commander of the 352nd Civil Affairs Command in Iraq, said one of the reasons

the Commander's Emergency Response Program has been so successful is that it is administered by the local battalion or brigade commander on the ground who is living and interacting with the citizens of his or her area of responsibility on a daily basis.

Who can better identify the immediate needs that can be addressed through low-cost, high-impact projects than the soldiers right there on the ground?

With all due respect for the policy people here in Washington, they cannot see the potholes in the roads, they cannot see the dilapidated buildings and infrastructure that has degenerated for years under the tyrannical dictatorship of Saddam Hussein. Our troops on the ground see these obstacles every day, and the Commander's Emergency Response Program lets them address these problems immediately and effectively with the cooperation and assistance of the Iraqi people.

Let me be clear—very clear: In most cases, the actual work is done by Iraqis themselves, so that in addition to yielding immediate and visible results, projects funded from the CERP provide jobs to Iraqis who are eager to rebuild their country and to stimulate the Iraqi economy.

Some people might be concerned that our commanders are walking around Iraq and Afghanistan with thousands of dollars of cash in their pockets, spending it without congressional oversight. Let me assure those people that is not so. The coalition has instituted strict controls to ensure complete accountability of the funds from the Commander's Emergency Response Program.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program is a low-cost, high-impact program, the effects of which will be felt throughout Iraq. It has been instrumental in gaining the confidence of the Iraqi people and in generating a tremendous amount of good will toward our troops on the ground.

Sometimes all it takes to improve the lives of Iraqi citizens and to build relationships is to repair a door that was damaged in a raid, or to provide a power generator to a factory so its Iraqi employees can get back to work. These are the types of small, yet meaningful, projects our commanders can tackle with the Commander's Emergency Response Program. These projects do not cost much in terms of dollars, but the return is tremendous. It is critical we continue to incorporate this approach into our reconstruction efforts in Iraq. Our commanders need reasonable, sound financial flexibility to match the speed of their operations and the dynamic nature of our battlefields.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program provides our commanders with a flexible tool to respond quickly and decisively to humanitarian problems. If fixing a well quickly solves a local problem and shows a neighborhood the coalition is improv-

ing their lives, then that is an important tool for our troops to have.

Initially, this program was funded from seized Iraqi assets. I am proud to say we gave the Department of Defense the authority to continue the Commander's Emergency Response Program in the current fiscal year 2004 supplemental appropriations bill. I look forward to again supporting the Department as we pass the fiscal year 2005 Department of Defense appropriations bill.

I close with a final thought. Our men and women in uniform liberated 25 million Iraqi people in a military campaign with swiftness, precision, and success—success unparalleled in history. We can attribute this success to the foresight and creativity that allowed us to prepare and equip a total force the world has never seen. Now we are applying that same foresight and creativity as we tackle the difficult task of reconstructing and stabilizing Iraq.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program provides visible, high-impact support to the Iraqi people so they can create a foundation for a free and stable society. It is a true success story in Iraq. I am proud of the troops who use it to help the Iraqi people every day, and I am proud to support this very important program.

Kate Kaufer and Sid Ashworth of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense prepared these remarks for my presentation.

I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

PENTAGON RESPONSE TO IRAQI PRISONER ABUSE

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, last week, along with a number of my colleagues, I went up into the room on the fourth floor in the Capitol where the Defense Department, the State Department, and the CIA come to brief us on classified information. I sat in a darkened room where we saw a slide show of the photographs that had been taken of Americans inflicting abuse on Iraqi prisoners. The pictures were revolting, they were disgusting, and they left us all with a sense of outrage that this had gone on, outrage that Americans had been involved in anything such as this.

I did not look forward to the experience. Indeed, I made the initial decision not to go. Then I decided: No, if I am going to be involved in examining what is here, I have to see the evidence, as revolting as it may be.

The sense of outrage that I and my colleagues felt about this was shared by all Americans, but in one sector of American society it seems to be even greater than anyplace else. There are some in this society who might not be able to guess what that sector is. But I would say the outrage that has been the strongest has come from those who serve in the American military.

Duty, honor, country—these are the watch words of the American military, and they were violated by those who took those actions in the prison in Baghdad. They did not do their duty. They dishonored the uniforms they wore as they abused those prisoners, and they brought disgrace on the country whose Constitution they had taken an oath to uphold and defend.

The sense of outrage is nationwide, but it is particularly focused among those who have sworn to uphold duty, honor, and country and saw their fellows in uniform violate those principles.

I rise to discuss this today because today is the first court-martial coming as a result of the investigations that have been conducted into this activity. This morning in Baghdad, Army SPC Jeremy Sivits pled guilty, was convicted, and sentenced to a 1-year imprisonment, reduction in rank, and a bad conduct discharge.

Now, there are those in our society who have less faith in the military, who say: These courts-martial are a part of a coverup; this is an attempt to gloss over what has happened; one cannot trust the military to investigate themselves; and we need a whole series of investigations by outside groups.

I believe the facts are that we will find out more what happened from the courts-martial than we would find out from any degree of investigation conducted elsewhere. I offer as a demonstration of the fact that the military can be trusted to act in matters of this kind the following chronology of what has happened with respect to this incident.

We now know that the abuse of the prisoners took place in the last quarter of 2003. We do not know the exact dates, but sometime toward the end of that year the alleged detainee abuse occurred. On January 13, 2004, SPC Joseph Darby opened an e-mail thinking he was going to see pictures that he described as a travelogue; a history of the performance of a particular unit. Instead, what had been downloaded on his computer were the photographs that my colleagues and I saw in room 407 of this building.

Specialist Darby was absolutely stunned. What did he do? Here were his fellow soldiers engaged in activity that was clearly in violation of everything he had been taught, people he wanted to feel close with and identified with, people who, perhaps, were his friends. What would he do? He did his duty, and he provided a CD of the abuse photos to the Army Criminal Investigation Command, or the CID, on January 13, 2004. On January 14, the CID began its investigation—no attempt to cover up. No attempt to hide or turn away from the fact that there was a potential difficulty. They began the next day, and they notified people up the chain of command of what they were doing.

On January 16, just 2 days later, Brigadier General Kimmitt announced that there would be an investigation by