

failing at an ever increasing rate. This is a sure sign of more troubles ahead.

To meet a critical need in the short term, the Army has reduced quality standards on its accessions. It is retaining problematic recruits and has relaxed commissioning qualifications for its officers. Anybody with a sense of history can understand the inherent risk in these policies, and they strike me as unwise.

Additionally, Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Army will soon approach Congress for authority to offer enlistment bonuses of up to \$40,000. That is a huge sum. And while I support it, I am doubtful it will have the effect the Army is looking for.

I wonder how long we can continue throwing money at this recruiting problem. I have always been a proud supporter of our troops. I have advocated pay raises for our service members and benefit increases for their families. I have done this for years. No one has been more consistent than I in calling for increased end strength, which I think would have alleviated many of these problems had they been enacted in a timely manner.

I cannot fault the Army for using everything in its power to attack the manpower challenge, but it is not the Army's problem it is the Nation's problem. Yesterday I sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense laying out the problem, which I would like to place in the RECORD at this time.

In this letter I urged the Secretary to develop a comprehensive vision of how the Department of Defense will approach the Army's crisis, and let him know that I would put out a call of my own to the youth of this Nation. We must not break the American support for our military. We must renew it by inspiring young people across our Nation to serve.

We cannot inspire that service by appealing to action in Iraq alone; it is defending our Nation from future threats and keeping our military the strongest in the world that may inspire their best. Along with the enlistment bonuses, they need a national call to service from our leaders that inspires them to keep our Nation and our military strong beyond Iraq. That will see us through the current fight and help us deter any future threat.

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 13, 2005.

Hon. DONALD L. RUMSFELD,
Secretary of Defense,
The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: It is clear to me the most important key to our success in Iraq is the development of the Iraqi security forces, and the infrastructure that supports and sustains them. I know you share that assessment. However, I recently sat through a briefing by the Joint Staff on the subject, and while we are making progress, it is painfully slow indeed. We have no choice but to accelerate the training of Iraqi forces so that we can hand the mission off to them as soon as possible. It is a race against time: either the American people will sour on this war and demand our withdrawal prematurely, or the American Army will break.

Iraq now represents a crisis that didn't exist when we began the war two years ago. Even as public support for the war ebbs lower and lower, the United States Army is on the brink of collapsing. Indeed, it may be that serious damage has been done to it already. In any case, it will not recover fully for years, and that is a national security threat we can ill afford.

This month, the Army's recruiting numbers are far below its goal, and this is an unmistakable trend. Although retention is holding, the toll is shaking the very foundation of American social structure. Army marriages, broken under the strain of an unsustainable operations tempo, are failing at an ever increasing rate. That is a sure sign of more troubles ahead.

To meet a critical need in the short term, the Army has reduced quality standards on its accessions. It is retaining problematic recruits and relaxed commissioning qualifications for its officers. Anybody with a sense of history can understand the inherent risk in these policies, and they strike me as unwise. Additionally, I understand that the Army will soon approach Congress for authority to offer enlistment bonuses of up to \$40,000. That is a huge sum, and while I support it, I am doubtful it will have the effect the Army is looking for.

I wonder how long we can continue throwing money at this recruiting problem. It is not the expense, because we can pay the cost if we align our national priorities properly. Instead, it is about precedents and principles. This insurgency is essentially a war of ideologies and therefore one must ask: What message do we send to our enemy when they can recruit suicide bombers as fast as they need them but we cannot entice our young men and women to serve without large sums of cash up front?

Mr. Secretary, as you know, I have always been a proud supporter of our troops; I have advocated pay raises for our service members and benefit increases their families for years. No one has been more consistent than I in calling for increased end strength, which I think would have alleviated a many of these problems, had they been enacted in a timely manner. I cannot fault the Army for using everything in its power to attack this manpower challenge, but this is not the Army's problem. It is the nation's problem.

I do not believe the youth of America is unwilling or incapable of serving their country for reasons other than a large bonus, but I think their country is not making a clear and compelling argument about why they should. Therefore, Mr. Secretary, I urge you to develop a comprehensive vision of how the Department of Defense will approach the Army's crisis.

In the absence of a unifying national message urging young Americans to consider military service, I will develop my own, and I will not miss an opportunity to deliver it. Frankly, it is becoming easier for me to articulate why it is important that we not lose in Iraq than it is to describe why we must win. It is not just about the dangers of losing a nation with the potential for representative self-government after so many years of tyranny, or about allowing a viper's nest of terrorism to flourish in the heart of the Middle East. Those reasons are powerful geopolitical considerations, but there are other compelling reasons for America as well.

Essentially, my message to these young people will be this: the issue is no longer just about what is good for the war in Iraq—this is about what is good for the long term health and security of our nation. While our nation's policies in Iraq have been poorly formulated at the strategic level by our civilian leadership—Congress included—the policy guidance has been superbly executed

at lower levels by our military. Right now, the strength of our national effort is in the high quality of our military forces. We need high quality people to continue to step up to serve. If they will not, the military we built out of the ashes following the Vietnam war into the finest force in history will atrophy to the point where it will be unready to fight the next time it is called upon—whether that is responding to a terrorist attack, deterring a conflict on the Korean Peninsula or across the Taiwan Strait, or somewhere else we can't yet foresee. I sincerely hope that the Department of Defense will do everything it can to raise this issue to the forefront of the national consciousness.

Mr. Secretary, before the war in Iraq began I sent the President two letters outlining my concerns about how the war was going to be conducted and how the aftermath would be handled. Sadly, many of my concerns regarding the aftermath have been realized. I was right then, and I am right now. The training of the Iraqi security forces must take on even greater urgency, and we must act to avoid the concerns I have described in this letter.

Sincerely,

IKE SKELTON,
Ranking Democrat.

AFGHANISTAN, THE NEW FORGOTTEN WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. SKELTON) for his leadership on the Armed Services Committee on the Democratic side, and his poignant remarks here this morning.

Not only are we dealing with the situation, Mr. Speaker, in Iraq, we are also dealing with a major forgotten situation in Afghanistan. And as we began the war in Iraq, many, many, many months ago, we began to shift our focus from Afghanistan to Iraq.

And we must remember that it was the Taliban who was harboring Osama bin Laden. And it was Osama bin Laden who funded and coordinated the attacks on September 11 on the World Trade Towers in New York, on the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.

So it is important for us to remember where this all started. And now, today, several years later, we have 19,000 troops in Afghanistan, and 140,000 troops in Iraq. We have forgotten and taken our eye off the ball. And one of the major concerns I have, Mr. Speaker, with the situation in Afghanistan is the issue of opium, the poppy cultivation in Afghanistan.

Two-and-a-half billion dollars, one-half of the GDP of Afghanistan is poppy, 70 percent of that sold in Europe as opium, funding through the black market, the terrorists cells not only in this country but all across the world. And it is very difficult for us to trace that underground economy. And I believe it was 5 or 6 months ago when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs was before our Armed Services Committee. I asked him, what are we going to do

about the drug production and the farming going on in Afghanistan, and about this year's crop, and what are we going to do?

And General Myers said, "Well, we have a little problem this year. The harvest came in early. The harvest came in early. So we missed it."

Now, can you imagine, and it is the same as Mr. Skeleton has been saying, and many others in this chamber have been saying, we do not have enough troops in Afghanistan, and we did not have enough troops to get the job done in Iraq. That goes all of the way back to what was the planning, what was the end game, what was the exit strategy for both of these wars?

It is like our foreign policy has attention deficit disorder. We start a war in Afghanistan, it is not finished. We have not eradicated the poppy cultivation, \$2 and a half billion. And then all of a sudden, before the job is finished we go off and we start something else. And now we are in Iraq with no end in sight. And that goes back to basic planning, basic military philosophy. You need an exit strategy. You need a game plan. And we have not been able to do it in Iraq, and we have not been able to do it in Afghanistan.

Just some statistics on what is going on in Afghanistan. 3 years after the fall of the Taliban, Afghanistan remains the world's sixth least developed country, 173rd out of 179 ranked by the United Nations. Miserable health and education systems, based on UN calculations, three-quarters of adult Afghans are illiterate. Fewer than one in five girls go to school in many of the provinces in Afghanistan, and half of the Afghans are poor. The average life expectancy for an Afghani is 45 and a half years, 20 years less than any neighboring country.

One Afghani woman dies in pregnancy every 30 minutes. We have been there for 3 years and we cannot set up basic health facilities so women could deliver a baby in safety? And it is because we have diverted our attention.

Four were injured yesterday in a car bombing, 20 were killed on June 1. Human Rights Watch is calling for NATO to send in more security forces to Afghanistan, following a marked deterioration of the security situation throughout May.

In the past month, Afghanistan has seen a series of political killings, violent protests, attacks on humanitarian workers, and bombings targeting foreign civilians and troops. Let us get it right. Let us focus on Afghanistan and make sure that the underground black market drug economy does not continue to fund terrorism.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until 10 a.m. today.

Accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 14 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess until 10 a.m.

□ 1000

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. LATHAM) at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Daniel P. Coughlin, offered the following prayer:

O God of spacious skies and patriots' dreams, today is a day of national patriotism as we honor the Flag of these United States of America.

Flags flown over this Capitol are a gift treasured by those who receive them. But You, Lord God, gift all Americans when they are moved to love this country and all its citizens by simply taking a few moments to make a solemn pledge.

We bless You and thank You for our women and men in the military who hoist this Flag over ships at sea and over makeshift camps on foreign soil; for senior citizen veterans who salute waving stars and stripes in a passing parade and for children in classrooms who hold their hearts and their hands before it.

May we join Americans across this country, around the world and from generations past and generations to come, as together we hope and pray to be people who will bring Your peace, liberty, and justice to a hungry world, now and forever. 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 Minnesota (Mr. KLINE) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. KLINE 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.

ADMINISTRATION SIDING WITH TOBACCO LOBBY

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, I applaud the Justice Department's decision to launch an investigation into whether or not the political pressure played a role in their decision to only seek a fraction of the possible penalty against the tobacco industry.

The U.S. Government won its case against Big Tobacco; but rather than seeking the maximum penalty of \$130

billion, the government suddenly decided to ask for only \$10 billion. Funny enough, that was equal to the amount of the taxpayer bail-out of the industry last year approved by this Congress.

The stunning reversal shocked everyone, including Philip Morris' lawyer, who said the company was very surprised.

Nobody seems to know how the decision was made. Some are saying that it had something to do with the \$40 million tobacco companies have given to the Republican Party since 1990. Or that it could have something to do with the \$170,000 they gave to President Bush last year. But that would be cynical. After all, what does \$40 million really get you nowadays?

Mr. Speaker, Americans want their justice unfiltered. Maybe we will even be able to get to the bottom of this Keystone Kops situation.

UNITED NATIONS REFORM

(Mr. DELAY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DELAY. Mr. Speaker, Thursday on the floor the House will take up the United Nations Reform Act of 2005. This is a comprehensive, indeed almost exhaustive, reform package aimed at the longstanding inefficiencies, inadequacies, and abuses at the U.N.

For all the frustration many Americans feel about the United Nations, the U.N., for all its faults, it remains the most established and immediately available forum for resolving international disputes and developing international consensus on a wide range of issues.

That said, most of the stated aims of the U.N.'s bureaucracy, to say nothing of the lofty ideal of its charter, have been undermined and in many cases brazenly contradicted by decades of waste, fraud, and abuse.

In the wake of the massive Oil-for-Food scandal still ripping through the U.N.'s headquarters, the American people, who currently provide 22 percent of the U.N.'s budget, can no longer trust that their dues payments are being responsibly spent.

The U.N., for all its strengths, should not be blindly trusted.

The clarity and transparency that defines democratic governments and institutions is nowhere to be seen in the U.N.'s financial management, or for that matter its human rights commission, its peculiar dislike for the State of Israel, its docile attitude towards the oppressive regimes, its hand-wringing and indecisiveness in times of crisis, and its anti-American policy-making apparatus.

The reform bill we will take up this week, the product of intense work by International Relations Chairman Henry Hyde will start to address these and other institutional shortcomings at the United Nations.

It would, most importantly, call for weighted voting on budgetary matters,