

□ 2030

him to successive 2-year terms until he retired at the end of his 14th term.

Truly a statesman in the best sense of the word, Barney Quilter rose to power and prominence in the Ohio legislature, serving as its speaker pro tempore, leading the Ohio House in tandem with Speaker Riffe for 20 years, an acclaimed and effective, powerful team. Partisanship was not Barney's goal. He worked side by side with legislators to move forward initiatives which benefited all the people of Ohio.

Henry Clay said: "Government is a trust, and the officers of the government are trustees; and both the trust and the trustees are created for the benefit of the people." This creed expressed by the 19th century giant was exemplified in the tenure of Representative Barney Quilter. His example should be emulated by all of us in public life.

A noble public servant, Barney shared his expertise and wisdom with any and all who asked. He was a real mentor to many, including myself; to his own son Bernie who also followed a path into public service. His daughter Mary Ann has devoted herself to her family and to educating the next generation. Barney and Mary's family are living testimonials to the dedication to others their stellar family exemplifies.

Despite his legislative career, Barney Quilter never lost sight of his true happiness: his wife and his children. He and his wife Mary shared 52 loving years together until Mary's passing in 1996. For nearly 2 decades, Barney faithfully would minister to her, even reading to her regularly, as she bore gracefully a debilitating illness that made it impossible to communicate with her family. He loved her so much.

Barney's own passing leaves his son Bernie and daughter Mary Ann and six grandchildren with our heartfelt condolences. We mourn the passing of this great American. We can celebrate his life and his service. May his strength and goodness guide us all as we seek to follow in his footsteps, always moving forward, no matter how steep the hill. Thank you, Barney Quilter. Onward.

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. REICHERT). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address my colleagues and the opportunity to raise some issues before the American people as we deliberate in this great body, the United States House of Representatives.

During the period of time that the House is not in session during August, commonly referred to as the August break, seldom is it a break for any of us, except that it changes our rhythm and we go do some other things. Generally, we do things to reach out and serve the people that we have the privilege and honor to represent.

This August was no exception. There were many Members who went out across the country and across the world and went on CODELs and traveled on their own accord and visited different places and brought back that breadth of knowledge. It occurred to me sometime in, I will say late May or early June, that it had been some time since I had been to the Middle East and been back to Iraq. I had been there twice in the past, but 12 months or more had gone by, and I had not been back there since.

As I listened to the mainstream media and began to get a picture of what was going on over in Iraq, it was a pessimistic one. As I talked to the troops who were coming back, particularly in Iowa, I got a different picture. As I listened to the briefings that came from the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Myers, I got a picture that was consistent with the picture of our military that was serving on the ground in Iraq and in Kuwait and in supporting roles around that theater.

Yet you can listen to all the information you want to listen to, you can read all the documents you like, you can read The New York Times and watch the mainstream television stations, and you can surf the Internet, but the perspective does not come until you go and put your own boots on the ground and look the soldiers in the eye that are serving there in that theater; those that have been there; those that have put their lives on the line; those who have risked their lives willingly in order to protect and preserve the freedoms that we have here and advance those freedoms to the people who live there.

So we began to organize a trip to go during the month of August over to Iraq. I wanted to go also to Afghanistan at the same time. I was not able to add Afghanistan to this trip because there was an election coming up which just took place over in Afghanistan, so they were not going to allow Members of Congress in there to make their situation, in preparing for those elections, more difficult.

But Iraq was still an open area that we could go into. As I looked at the map of Iraq and the places that I had been, and in talking to the Members of this Congress who have made, some of them, as many as four trips or more over into that region, there were some places that we did not have a lot of experience with, some places we had not looked at.

In fact, this Congress appropriated \$18.4 billion for the reconstruction in Iraq that included roads, sewers, bridges, electrical generation and transmission, and the oil distribution system; to upgrade the ports and upgrade the schools and hospitals, the kinds of things that would put Iraq up into maybe the last quarter of the 20th century or, if all goes well, at some time they will be into the first quarter of the 21st century.

But, Mr. Speaker, in spite of all of the things that we have done over there, the disaster that Iraq has been from the perspective of allowing their infrastructure to erode over the last 35 years and a dictator that had his power as his God, and his people at his feet, a person who took his death and destruction to many wings of Iraq, and starved them and kept them from getting medicine and education and health care, and sometimes shut off their water, as he did in the southern part of Iraq.

But we invested in their infrastructure. The American people put \$18.4 billion up front. And we said at the time it was about a \$100 billion project to try to get Iraq up into the last quarter of the 20th century, a more modern world.

And if they cannot get their country more modernized, it is going to be significantly more difficult for them to be able to sustain the type of government that I pray will become a constitutional republic that represents the people in Iraq and the will of the people in Iraq.

And so the \$18.4 billion was invested. And most of it was committed to projects, and we knew that in this Congress. And we committed to the support of that. But no one had really been over there to follow and track the projects. And in fact I was not aware of a single Member of Congress that had gone into Basra in the south, in the British region. So we put that on our schedule.

And the wetland area where the swamp Arabs lived, they were over 800,000 strong. And when Saddam was finished putting down their insurrection that began about in about 1991 or 1992, he had killed approximately 120,000 of them and run off maybe 450,000 and there remained maybe 200,000 of the 800,000 swamp Arabs that lived in an area that was a wetland twice the size of the Everglades, Saddam drained it, turned the water away from it, and forced many of them out and changed their life.

So we went to Basra and looked at that region in the south, and the oil region there. We went to the wetlands and flew over that in a British helicopter and looked at that, and we went up to Kirkuk in the north, another area that many Members had not seen.

And in that process we came back down through Baghdad, and we did meet with a significant number of people who had been involved in the reconstruction of Iraq. We saw project after project that was there. We saw places where the money went. And along with that on that trip myself, and also the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) who was on his fourth trip, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) from Laredo, who was elected to this Congress and sworn in here in early January of this year, and did not take him very long, he has made his trip to Iraq to start things out, and I appreciate your company along on that trip. Also

the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

And the four of us were the compadres that visited that area. And we had an intense 5-day trip that compressed a lot of hours in Iraq and very quickly saw a lot of the country and met a lot of the people, including soldiers from our own districts in almost every stop, although there were a few Texans along almost everywhere we went.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for his leadership and for what he did to organize that congressional delegation visit to Iraq. I enjoyed that and learned a great deal from that experience, along with the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS).

I think what we learned in Iraq is that clearly there are problems, and those problems remain; but considerable progress has been made. That progress to me was best exemplified by a man from Pennsylvania named Albert Chowansky, Jr.

And Albert Chowansky Jr., to me, exemplifies the spirit and sense of purpose reflected by American civilians working and serving in Iraq. This man, Albert is a Frackville, Schuylkill County native who left the coal regions in late 1970s, at the time a rather depressed area of the State to study engineering at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

And this well-traveled engineer is now managing the construction of the Taza power plant near Kirkuk in northern Iraq, and this is that power plant that I am referring to. We learned a great deal from that visit.

But this natural gas-powered plant, which Albert calls MOAG, or the mother of all generators, and it really is, is tangible proof of the positive reconstruction efforts proceeding in Iraq.

Visiting Iraq, the four of us, we saw efforts to rebuild a country, not just from a recent war, but from decades in which its people and its natural resources were raped and ravaged by an evil tyrant, Saddam Hussein.

As part of this bipartisan four-Member congressional delegation that visited Kirkuk, Basra, Baghdad, and Kuwait, we witnessed this and just a handful of the thousands of other coalition construction projects over a few days.

You know, many of us marveled at the accomplishments of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under whose auspices much of this massive construction and reconstruction continues, simultaneously fighting an insurgency, reconstructing a nation, and at that particular moment we were there, assisting in the development of a constitution, the drafting and development of a constitution, which is a daunting objective.

Security is intense. Most of the time we wore body armor and helmets, and

we were protected by heavily armed personnel virtually all of the time. Nevertheless, I left Iraq feeling optimistic and hopeful that the slow gradual pace to normal life in much of Iraq is progressing, not without setbacks and heart-breaking loss of life, but still with purpose and determination.

You know, the transporting of this particular MOAG, the mother of all generators, is a story all by itself. Moving a nearly 500-ton piece of equipment 600 miles from Jordan across the dangerous Al-Anbar Province in western Iraq to Kirkuk by convoy is testament to the extraordinary logistical capabilities of the United States military.

You know, after a few ineffective, but still very troublesome, mortar attacks that landed near this particular power plant, Albert Chowansky worked with regional ethnic and tribal leaders to form a local work force, equitably distributing jobs to Sunni Arabs, Shiia Arabs, Tukomeins, and Kurds.

This project is nearly complete, and there have been no more mortar attacks. These are just some of the circumstances under which the reconstruction of Iraq's infrastructure is occurring. But there you have an example of just a guy using his good common sense and, realizing there were some attacks, went out and met with local tribal leaders, talked with them, distributed jobs and they all worked well together. And just good old-fashioned American innovation working locally to solve a very different, difficult and complex problem.

You know, our delegation also spent time in the southern Iraqi province of Basra at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. We visited the nearby port of Umm Qasr and rode with the Iraqi Navy in speed boats through the harbor.

The Iraqi Navy is actually more like a coast guard of about 800 sailors trained by the British Royal Navy and tasked with harbor security and with the protection of the oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. This is just a little picture of a meeting with some of the officers of the Iraqi Navy, myself, and the members of the delegation.

But we had a wonderful experience with the Iraqi Navy. And you could just get a sense of the professionalism, and of course they were well trained by the Royal Navy.

Flying with the British Army in a Merlin helicopter, we viewed the marshlands near Basra. And the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) just referred to those marshlands. These marshes were originally twice the size of the Florida Everglades until Saddam Hussein drained them as retribution to the marsh Arabs who rose up against him after the 1991 Persian Gulf war.

Saddam Hussein displaced and killed tens of thousands of these people, at the very least, whose civilization had lived in this ancient homeland for 5,000 years.

It may again be possible to grow crops there, although it is unknown if

we can ever fully undo the environmental terrorism of the deposed Iraqi leader.

Militarily, the Basra province is relatively quiet and is one of out of 14 of 18 provinces that have seen progress with comparatively less insurgent activity than in some years of Iraq.

The Royal Marines regional commander, General Jim Dutton, was quite confident in the capability of the Iraqi Army. We spent a fair amount of time with him. And he had quite high praise for the Iraqi Army in the southern region under his command.

Our delegation later then flew into Baghdad via U.S. Army helicopter, Black Hawk helicopters; and we flew a few hundred feet above the ground. We were escorted by Apache helicopters. We flew from Kirkuk at this point back down to Baghdad.

The British, we flew in the Merlin helicopters down in the Basra area. But from our view, and just a few hundred feet above ground, we could see oil pipelines and bridges across the Tigris River under construction, along with vacant gun embankments. It seemed like bone dry ditches just about everywhere, irrigation channels that were drug out and bone dry.

But there were a lot of ditches and a lot of scars on the Earth, vacant pools of oil exposed next to bodies of water. You know, in Baghdad, in Baghdad's Green Zone actually, our delegation met with General John Abizaid and General George Casey, respectively, the military commanders for Southwest Asia and Iraq.

The generals presented, I feel, a very sober yet hopeful analysis of the insurgency situation. Actually, there is not one insurgency in Iraq, but three disparate groups: The disgruntled Baathists, the Sunni extremists, and they are the most dangerous, of course, because they include both domestic and foreign al Qaeda-affiliated insurgents, and the third group are the so-called Rejectionists, a hodge podge of people who for whatever reasons are unhappy or angry but are more likely to be integrated back into the mainstream of society.

But regardless, that group of Sunni extremists is the most dangerous because they are al Qaeda affiliated, many of whom are coming from outside of Iraq. The generals told us that every month 3,000 insurgents are taken off the streets. That is what the generals told us. Every month 3,000 insurgents are taken off the streets, that is, they are captured or killed, mostly captured.

General Casey said that 180,000 Iraqi security forces are trained and equipped, and that number will be more than 200,000 come January. Our congressional delegation also met with embassy officials for an overview of the political reforms and progress on the constitutional convention that was occurring just down the street.

Of course, this was just prior to the constitutional convention being adopted by those who were participating.

Federalism, the role of women, women's rights, of course, role of Islam, and control of the country's premier resource, oil, are among the issues to be resolved.

And I left feeling persuaded that all sides, Shiia, Sunni and Kurd, are dedicated to reaching an agreement. It was clear that they understood, even though the Kurds and Shiias represented a majority of the country, that they understood that they could not have a country without the Sunnis being included.

And that is not an easy thing for them, given the maltreatment that many of them had received at the hands of largely Sunni rule or the Baathists for some time.

You know, the American role in that constitutional process was not to impose a solution, but to facilitate discussion and present options. And in fact I just left the Capitol, the Cannon Building where I heard one of my constituents, Colonel Platte Moring give a presentation who helped there. He was in the Army National Guard. He made a presentation about his role in helping the Afghans develop a constitution about a year and a half earlier.

And so there were some similarities there. Again, the American role was really to help facilitate discussion, present options, and help them when they got in trouble, not to impose solutions.

I think that was very important. That was an experience here in Iraq and of course also in Afghanistan. That same day, we also had lunch with the American-Iraqi Chamber of Commerce, and we later met with three judges overseeing the special tribunal on war crimes who are the people who will try Saddam Hussein for crimes against his people.

The judges impressed me very much with their knowledge, their wisdom, and dedication to the establishment of an independent, impartial judiciary. Probably one of the best aspects of that whole visit is meeting with these judges. You get a sense of their commitment to the rule of law and the importance that they have a transparent process and one that they can be proud to show to the world with respect to the trial that they will be conducting at some point in the not-to-distant future. I believe before the end of the year, we are likely to hear more about that.

□ 2045

We also spent some time in Kuwait. There we witnessed the up-armoring of the various American vehicles. We also witnessed the massive logistical support operation that dispatches convoys of 800 trucks per day carrying everything necessary to support an engaged military. More than 20 percent of the trucks carry water. Of those 800 trucks, over 20 percent of them were carrying water. I met a gentleman from my hometown. Army Major Steve Miscenzski, an Easton native, was

among the Pennsylvanians supporting this effort. We all dined with Steve and other Keystone State natives at Camp Arifjan. We also met some folks from Iowa and Texas. There are always Texans everywhere, a lot of Texans in the Middle East and everywhere we went. It was just great to see them all.

Throughout the trip, we ate in these mess halls with soldiers and Marines whose morale was exceptionally high considering the 125-degree heat that we walked into in Kuwait while wearing full body armor and helmets. I think we all would agree, too, that the food was quite good and plentiful. Veterans of previous wars would be envious. We hear our uncles talk in World War II about the old K-rations. They would have been envious of the food, I think, that was being served.

At every stop along the way, I was able to share some of the generosity of the people of the 15th Congressional District. I handed out phone calling cards as most of us did. I also handed out Gatorade mix packets to our troops from Pennsylvania and elsewhere, even some of our coalition partners from the UK and the Netherlands and Australia, for example. These items, by the way, were donated by the Dexter and Dorothy Baker Foundation and a drive led by Chapman resident Dottie Niklos of Blue-Star Mothers through the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council. These gifts were well received by our troops. We insisted that they call home and they seemed to do that on a regular basis.

Leaving Kuwait, we flew home via Ramstein Air Force Base near Frankfurt, Germany. There we visited wounded troops in the Landstuhl military hospital. Many of the troops were wounded in Afghanistan as well as Iraq. At Ramstein, we briefly boarded an Air Force plane carrying wounded troops back to Andrews Air Force Base near Washington, D.C. On this plane, I had the honor and privilege to meet a young marine, Travis Gray, who was a fellow Allentown native. I do not know who was more excited by that, me or Travis, but I was just thrilled to meet this young man who was on his back in a stretcher in an Air Force plane. I am happy to report that Travis was in quite good spirits. I had called his mother shortly afterwards to give her a report on his condition. He seemed to be doing quite fine and he was improving. I think we had some pretty good news there for Travis and the whole Gray family.

The harsh reality of war really struck me and I think it struck my colleagues as well as I stepped off that plane carrying Travis and his fellow comrades to make way for the final two passengers, two unconscious, critically wounded soldiers. Watching as these two soldiers were boarded was an emotional time, as 12 airmen methodically and gently lifted their stretchers and all the life-sustaining medical equipment onto the plane. It was quite a sight and quite emotional. That is

where the harsh reality of war really strikes one, witnessing that particular procedure.

I left Iraq feeling proud of the Americans serving there. The transition from Saddam's Iraq to a new country, establishing representative government consistent with the country's traditions, heritage and culture, has been painful, grueling and difficult. Nevertheless, our military's perseverance is inspirational, just as is the effort of our civilian personnel. In fact, one of those civilians I met there actually was a Capitol Hill staffer who I bumped into on a cold February night after being in Congress for about a month and a half. I met this young man. I was getting dinner and he was telling me he was about to head over, a civilian with DOD and who did I run into in Iraq, in Kirkuk, but this young man who was so proud of his service and will be home shortly. I have stayed in touch with him.

The point is the dedication of our military and civilian personnel to their work and this mission is truly extraordinary. Many people ask me when American troops will leave Iraq. I cannot give a precise answer, but it is my belief there will be a military presence in Iraq and Afghanistan for the foreseeable future. The question is how many troops will be required and under what circumstances will those troops be there. I believe we will see an eventual drawdown of those troops.

Like all Americans, I want our troops to come home safely. Like most thoughtful Americans, no matter how they viewed the circumstances leading up to the war or how it has been conducted, I understand that leaving Iraq prematurely without better stabilizing the country could yield catastrophic consequences.

That said, as the political and military situation stabilizes and improves, the American presence in Iraq will diminish. For now, it is a matter of patience and will.

The gentleman from Iowa again led our delegation and did a great job of it. I should note, too, that he was very gracious and on every occasion really did acknowledge the bravery not just of our personnel but also of the Iraqis who are serving there, many of whom are in the Iraqi navy, for example, and others in the security forces who really cannot tell many of their neighbors and friends what they do for a living. They cannot wear their uniforms to work. They serve at great risk to themselves and to their families but they believe that they have an obligation to make sure that country is stable and safe and free of the types of horrible violence that we have witnessed there far too often in recent days.

Mr. KING of Iowa. I thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania for his presentation as well as his participation. It was an honor for me to have the privilege to go there with my colleagues and an honor certainly to look our soldiers in the eye and the nonuniformed

people that are over there, especially the Americans but all of our coalition people that are sacrificing and committing to make that region a better place.

Before you step away from the podium, one thing I would like to comment upon and that is your second picture over there to the left that shows yourself and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) meeting some of the Iraqi navy. As you said, it is an 800-man navy. We don't expect the Iraqis to have a Navy, but there is, and trained by the Royal Marines, as you said. What impressed me as we went down that line, they were all lined up in rank order. As I went down that path and shook each one of their hands, and maybe there were 20 to 25 of them altogether, every single one of them looked me in the eye and every single one of them had some word of English that they must have practiced all night long that they could greet me and thank us for being there. We truly have partners and they are part of the coalition. When we say coalition troops, we mean American troops, all the troops that are part of that, and we mean the Iraqis. That picture brings that memory back. It was, I think, an unusual and unique situation that had taken place over there with our delegation that probably had not been the case in any of the others that had traveled over there. I wanted to point that out while I had the opportunity and I appreciate the gentleman from Pennsylvania's presentation.

Also, you made remarks with regard to the fact that we ran into people from our prospective States. We sat down in the mess hall and broke bread with Pennsylvanians and with Texans and with Iowans and with many of the States in the union. We walked into a room one evening, though, and everybody in that room was from Texas except you and me. So the next time I climbed aboard a C-130 that was full of soldiers, I walked back over there and I hollered out, is there anybody here not from Texas? About half of them gleefully raised their hands.

You are well represented over there. I bring this up in a humorous way to recognize that. At this point I would like to recognize the gentleman from Laredo, Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) who joined us on that trip.

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Iowa and the gentleman from Pennsylvania, also the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) who joined us, also. I also want to thank you for your leadership, taking us, this particular delegation, the delegation that you took us on took us to different parts of Iraq that other delegations had not gone to, especially the southern part of Iraq.

I would like to talk about three things that are really what I would call snapshots of this particular trip that I think are important to share with us here today. The first one, of course, has to do with the reconstruction projects.

Sometimes I believe the media does not give it enough time to focus on the reconstruction work, the schools, the clinics, the hospitals, the electrical plants, the water plants that are built, those types of projects that really have changed the daily lives of the Iraqi people. When you are talking about a child that for the first time sees a board that you can actually get some sort of stick and write on, the blackboard, it is something they have seen for the first time, you are changing the lives of those young Iraqi children that will really make a big difference. I think you would agree with me that as we are able to get them educated, as we are able to see them, able to teach them the principles of democracy, the principles of being able to associate, that we really are making some changes that will transform not only Iraq but the Middle East and that will have a ripple effect to the other countries. I think you would agree with me on that particular point.

The other point that I would like to talk about is also the commitment of the Iraqi people. I think the gentleman from Pennsylvania did a great job when he talked about the Iraqi businesspeople, men and women. All they want to do is they want to be able to have a business, be able to secure a future for their children and for their families. They want to be able to send their children without having to worry about being blown up in some bomb going to school. They just want to make sure they have a normal life just like you and I and a lot of folks want to have. I think seeing that in those Iraqi businesspeople, both men and women, was something that was very enlightening.

The other thing that the gentleman from Pennsylvania touched upon which I think is important is the commitment of the judiciary. Having an independent judiciary is extremely important. If you recall when we were talking to the judges and we talked to three different judges, what we call the investigating judge, the judge that will do the trial work and, of course, the appellate judge, that gave us a pretty good sense of the work, the very difficult work that they have to do. I remember one of the comments they said. They said, all we want is we don't want the Iraqi politicians to get involved in our job. We want to make sure we do our job in an independent manner. That is important, because think about this. Those judges are probably targeted. They are people that do not want them to do their job. They do not want them to try Saddam, the evil dictator. They want to make sure that they don't do their job. But what they wanted, these jurists, all they wanted to do was to be free from any influences and do their job. I think that has to be admired, especially under those very difficult circumstances.

The last point that I want to mention is also the commitment of our soldiers.

When you think about it, when we were at that hospital in Germany, we had soldiers that had been injured, soldiers that were hurting. When we asked them what they were thinking about, the first thing they wanted to say was, I want to get well so I can go back and take care of my buddies and be with my buddies and my friends. That is a commitment of the U.S. military, that even when they are down, they are ready to get back and go back in the field so they can finish their job and the mission because they believe in what they are doing there.

The last point that I want to bring about is, I have been in different town hall meetings and people asking us when are our American soldiers coming back. As I told them, and I think we all realize this, we need to finish the mission. We need to make sure that that country is stabilized, because we took out a power structure that was not taking care of its people, and we cannot leave that vacuum there. We need to make sure that we put a structure there, a structure of government, a constitution, the rule of law, the principles of a constitution so the people can follow the rule and the laws there. Once we establish that law there, then I think we can start bringing our soldiers home. I think the constitution and especially that election or that vote on October 15 is going to be extremely important. The elections on December 15 when they elect their representatives, that will be extremely important. But also the building up of the Iraqi military is important.

I remember when I started back here with the gentleman from Pennsylvania back in January, we asked the question of the Department of Defense, how many soldiers do we have, Iraqi soldiers? At that time I recall it was about 120,000. We were informed last month that they had about 180,000. Sometime by the end of the year they should have over 200,000 soldiers, Iraqi soldiers. As one of the generals told us, when one Iraqi soldier stands up, one American soldier can go ahead and sit down.

□ 2100

It means that the faster we can build the Iraqi military security forces then the faster they can start taking care of their homeland, and that is extremely important.

So I certainly want to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) very, very much for the opportunity that he provided the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) to go down there to see, first of all, the morale of our soldiers, to see the commitment of the Iraqi business people, the jurists, the people that want to have normal lives so they can have a future there. Certainly I want to thank him for giving me an opportunity to see the reconstruction projects, the schools, the clinics, the hospitals, the water plants, the electrical plants, to make sure that

they can have the basic utilities that sometimes we take for granted.

I want to thank the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for the opportunity and certainly the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), one of my freshmen colleagues, for having an opportunity where we are able to ask the questions and share our thoughts and ideas in a bipartisan way. Because, again, we want to do the best thing for our country, and we certainly want to do the best thing for the Iraqi country over there, also.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) willingness to join us in that travel across to that other side of the world, along with the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) and those kind of trips build bonds that will help us reach across the aisle and work in a bipartisan fashion beyond this subject matter and into many others, I hope. That is one of the residual benefits of those long and grueling days over there. It did get a little warm I understood, 128-degrees, I know we saw that, and looking back on the pictures, did it get a little warmer than that?

Mr. CUELLAR. If the gentleman does not mind me interrupting for a second, I am from Laredo, Texas. It is one of the hottest places in the country, 104, 105, 107 degrees, but I have to say that being there at a place where it was 125 degrees, and I think that was a cool day compared to some of the days, that has to tell us that our soldiers have to go through very difficult times, but at the same time, the morale was good. They were doing their job, and they believed in what they were doing.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I have seen over there on different occasions when the temperature cooled off down to 106, I have seen the Marines go out at three o'clock in the afternoon and play basketball in 106 temperature because it has cooled off.

I got an e-mail from a lieutenant colonel that we met over there at Camp Arifjan, Lieutenant Colonel Gary Ace, and he happens to be an individual that helped set up a trip a year ago last 4th of July for my staff and their families to take a bus and go up to Gettysburg for the 4th of July with the Army historian, to travel throughout all Gettysburg and review that on the historical day with the Army historian.

Lieutenant Colonel Gary Ace, who was deployed to the Middle East and met us there at Camp Arifjan at really our first stop, it was quite ironic. He sent me an e-mail a couple of days ago that said it has cooled off down to about 110 or 112, and it seems ironic to say so, but it is a relief from the heat.

I would just like to go through a number of the things that I reflected upon as I listened to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) and the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) speak on this issue and refer back to a colloquy, if I might.

You brought a number of things to mind that I would like to embellish a little bit. One of them has to do with the heat and the water, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania's (Mr. DENT) remarks in particular, when he said bone-dry ditches. Certainly they are there and the fighting positions that have been dug for the tanks and armor, we see that from the air, especially in the north around the Kirkuk region, where we were.

Yet, in the south, there are irrigation ditches down there that have been hand dug and have been maintained for centuries. The water stands near the top of the ditch because it is the water that comes down the Tigress and Euphrates and it fans out in that delta. It is not sand. It is soil. It should be productive soil, and I looked at that from the air I do not know how many times. We finally got down on the ground and got a chance to look, and I could never understand why you could not see anything growing next to those ditches full of water, in the summertime, from the air, nothing green to be seen from the air.

That is because nothing grows there in those particular regions. So my old farm boys unlocked the key to that inadvertently when they stuck a thermometer in the soil. We plant corn in the spring in Iowa after the frost goes out and soil temperature gets up to 54 degrees. The soil temperature there, about that far down in the soil, was 154 degrees, and I am sure the broccoli I had a couple of days ago had not reached that temperature when they served it to me in the restaurant.

So that is some sense of what kind of heat there is, that relentless sun, and how that builds up in the soil. It would sterilize most seeds. So they have to have a different kind of agriculture than I am used to, but maybe in Laredo, they could figure that out.

The American-Iraqi Chamber of Commerce, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) referenced that and I think both of my colleagues did. It was an interesting surprise to me. It never occurred to me that there was a chamber of commerce in Iraq, and yet to find out that the Americans that were there teamed up with the Iraqis that are there, and they are seeking to build a free enterprise, retail organization that can help develop the kind of commerce that they need to grow that city and grow every city in that country.

To walk in there and have them ask, well, we would like to have you give a speech to the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, now there is an ironic twist of fate in this life that this fellow from the cornfield never anticipated.

I looked around, and went, well, where is my interpreter; I guess I will be willing to do that. They said you do not need an interpreter, sir; they speak English here in Baghdad. So they set the microphone up and gave an introduction, and we all came and sat at the table, and my colleagues actually

mixed around with them at their tables and gathered together afterwards. I gave a little speech there in English.

I could tell they understood me. They responded, smiled and laughed and clapped and frowned all at the right times. It occurred to me that if they could pull that off in Baghdad, we can pull that off in the United States of America, that English speech to the Chamber of Commerce in many of our major cities, but just a little bit of life's irony there.

They were open, they were welcome and curious. When that was over, all of us had a cluster of Iraqi Chamber of Commerce members around us with their business cards. They want to do business and trade cards and do commerce, and they are eager. In fact, we were in the Al Rasheed hotel. That was in the green zone, but that is the hotel that Deputy Security Wolfowitz was in when it was rocketed a year or more or so ago. That is one of those little ironies.

The other one that the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR) mentioned, the odd request, and I was very curious about the judicial branch of the Iraqi government. I had, I will say, a friend and colleague from Iowa, the U.S. Attorney, Charles Larson, Senior, who served over there for more than a year, and I believe it was 15 to 16 months, trying to get the Iraqi judicial branch up to speed and trying to teach them what we know from our rule of law in the United States. He served over there intently and in a very dedicated way, along with his son, Major Chuck Larson, Junior, who served as a Army Reservist in the same area.

I have seen pictures of them together, and Chuck Larson, Senior, the U.S. Attorney, brought me back, an Iraqi flag, that flew over Baghdad the day of their first election they had when we saw those fingers dipped in purple. These gentlemen convinced me that we should take a look at the judicial branch of government in Iraq. That is what precipitated the request.

We wanted to go over to the courtroom. I wanted to sit in the courtroom where Saddam would be tried for his crimes. I sat in two of his thrones, and that was kind of good, kind of fitting, but I really wanted to go sit in the chair where he was going to be, really sit in the witness chair where people would testify against him. Because of security reasons we could not go out of the zone, across the street and into that building. So they brought the three judges to us.

We sat down and talked with them, and these people, they risk their lives. They are dedicated to the rule of law. They want the politicians out of that decision-making process. They do not want them leveraging the rule of law decision.

I am going to shift into my interpretation of what I heard that day, and I am not going to represent it as being a verbatim transcript of what came out of their mouths but how I sort it

through because we're working through interpreters, but it works like. I was curious. I wanted to know was Saddam Hussein up for the death penalty. Could they sustain the death penalty? Was there law in Iraq in the face of the changing situation of the Constitution and the ratification that is pending for October 15, when he is queued up to go on trial October 19.

I asked the question directly: Will Saddam face the death penalty? The answer was, well, Mr. Congressman, we could not be commenting on a case that could come before this court. It sounded like an American judge, and it was the right answer.

Then I had to ask this long, convoluted, hypothetical question, and when I got all the way around the Horn, it might have been a double figure eight before I got back with my hypothetical, and then the answer was, if someone who might not be related to this case, that could have committed a crime similar to the one you have described that was similar to the one we may think Saddam has committed, could be up against a charge that would start the way they do in the United States with death first and then life in prison and then the penalty goes on down from there.

One of the other judges was eagerly shaking his pencil. He wanted the floor, and as I understood this and interpreted this, it was the paragraph that applied in that case to the crimes that I had described only provided for one penalty and that was the ultimate penalty. At that point, I volunteered if they could not find someone in Iraq to carry that out, I would be willing to do so provided he had been faced with the rule of law and had a just trial.

So I look forward eagerly for that trial to ensue, but it was an interesting and a unique experience to have that. It presented us also with a very neat, octagonal box of dates, that high class, and that is one of the things that Iraq does export. They export some oil, and they export quite a lot of dates, and those are about the only two products that leave that country to bring cash flow back in.

The areas around Basra have a tremendous amount of oil reserves yet, and the wells, the pipelines, the distribution system, the refineries are not in the most modern of conditions. They need capital investment from outside, and it needs to be upgraded into the modern and efficient world. That is a factor of the depreciation that comes from the years of neglect, in addition to some of the sabotage that has taken place, but the years of neglect would debilitate that system anyway. All that oil that they have is not coming to market as quickly as it should, Mr. Speaker.

Then we went up to the Kirkuk area, and I think we pointed this out in the helicopter, but we did not have very good audio there. There were areas where there was pooled oil that was not oil spilled. It was oil that had

seeped to the top of the ground. There was that much concentration up there.

I am told that the oil reserves down south by Basra are larger and greater than those up by Kirkuk, but there is where I saw the oil that had seeped to the top of the ground. There is where I saw the most need, I think, for new drilling, new pipelines, new distribution systems, new refineries, and up there is where they had nine pipelines that crossed the Tigress River on a bridge.

During the operations in March of 2003, our air force went in and appropriately cut off that transportation route by blowing the bridge. When they did, nine pipelines, of course, were severed at the same time. They have all been reconnected, except for a 40-inch line that each time that they tried to lay that across the river, it would get sabotaged.

So they awarded a contract to lay it under the river, a 40-inch pipeline, 40 inches in diameter, so 3 feet and 4 inches in diameter. They have been trying to bore underneath there. Now, they are going to put it underneath in an open cut. I guess that is the kind of thing that I am interested in in my business, but to lay that pipeline 25 feet under the bed of the Tigress River, a 40-inch line, so that if the insurgents, or enemy, seeks to come along and detonate that, I suspect they will not have the ability to get down there 25 feet below the bottom of the Tigress River to blow up that 40-inch line. When it is running, it will help the cash flow of Iraq.

Speaking of that cash flow, the things that are missing, one thing that is missing from this discussion tonight. We have not talked about tactics, military security. We have referenced the bravery of our troops, the dedication, the sacrifice of our troops but not the tactics because, and I will just say this, is that as we looked at the condition of security in the country, as we listen to our military, our officers and our regular soldiers that come from our regions, that look us in the eye and speak with our accent and we know they tell us the truth, were not concerned about whether we could hang on to that country from a military tactical standpoint. It was never raised as an issue. They are doing their job, and they know they are doing the best they can with the security, and they feel in control of the situation.

It also was the case with the generals that briefed us, including General Dutton of the British, who said I can think of no alternative but optimism, and what would you do if you were not optimistic, if you did not think there was a positive solution, then what would your alternative be? Of course, there is no rational answer to that. He is right in kind of a clear, succinct, British way.

General Casey and General Abizaid briefed us. He said the enemy cannot win, if the politicians stay in the fight, and we had a discussion on the way

back. The question was, did he mean American politicians or did he mean Iraqi politicians. We were kind of split down the line on that. It was a really good, healthy discussion, and I have just come to the point that I do not want to resolve that question. I want that to stand out there that he meant both. The Iraqi politicians and the American politicians must stay in the fight.

If we do that, if we send a consistent, solid message that we stick with this till the end, that America stands with the Iraqis until the Iraqis stand on their own, and by the way, they also advised us that a base would be turned over to the Iraqis for their control, and that has happened, and it has happened more than once since we have been back. I saw the clip a couple of days ago. Several bases now are Iraqi-run bases that we have.

Americans are stepping back. Iraqis are stepping forward. When it was America leading operations, the combat operations, it was Americans with Iraqis trying to lead them into combat in the early stages.

□ 2115

Now it is the Iraqis leading with American support, and sometimes it is Iraqis only. And you will see they have not cracked. They have not run. They have held together.

Far different than that first operation of sending Iraqis in April of 2004 into Fallujah. Those Iraqis were undertrained and underequipped, and we sent those Iraqis in there with berets and pistols on their belts and no radios and no armor, to fight alongside Marines that were trained and equipped and had communications. We should not have been surprised if they did not stand and fight. They were not ready. But they are getting ready.

It is not easy to establish a military tradition. I believe, though, that that security is coming. And when General Casey says that the enemy cannot win if the politicians stay in the fight, that means he has confidence in the security situation and the military situation that is there. I do too. I believe that in the history of this country, and probably in the history of the world, there has never been a nation go to war with a higher class of people that are in uniform on the ground in Iraq and in Afghanistan today.

And I say that for a number of reasons. One of them is that it is an all-volunteer military force. I do not know if we have ever done that before to this scale and for this duration to this scale. And we also have so many National Guard and so many reservists that add to our Active-Duty personnel that are extraordinarily professional. And these Guard and reservists have other professions that they bring in that add to the level of technical abilities, training and professionalism in a technical age, when if it goes beyond picking up an M-16 and putting on a

pair of boots, these guys are professionals in a lot of ways and are specialists in a lot of ways. And I think it is the best quality that has ever gone to the war. And every time I look them in the eye, they convince me of that. And certainly they did over there.

Mr. Speaker, I have a lot more to say about this, and I will probably take a shot at it, but I want to take a moment to bounce this back over to my colleagues, who certainly have their minds on what we are talking about here, and surely there is a gap or two that my colleague from Pennsylvania may want to fill, and so I yield to him.

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for this colloquy, and he made a point that I think needs to be repeated. General Casey pointed this out to us. We were in Iraq in August, and of course there was a lot of press attention about the situation in Iraq, and much of it very negative press. But General Casey said to us, have you read any stories or heard any stories about Iraqi soldiers leaving their positions? Have you seen any stories like that lately? We said, well, no, we have not. He said, well, the reason that is the case is because that does not happen anymore.

My colleague pointed that out, that the Iraqi Army is much better trained and equipped than they had been earlier. So sometimes what we do not hear is very important; that the Iraqi Army is standing in, standing much stronger and is much better trained and equipped at doing the job that we expect them to do in many cases. They are not where they need to be just yet, but they are making great progress, and that is a story that has not been told very well, and I am glad the gentleman has raised that tonight.

Another thing the gentleman mentioned, too, about Iraq that again has not been discussed very much out in the public, is one of the people who joined us on that trip was a gentleman from the Army, an Assistant Secretary of the Army named Dean Pops, who was part of the CPA, the Coalition Provisional Authority, at one point. We had a discussion. We all know how Congressmen are. We can get very unfocused. We get into our business and we can get a little scattered. But there we were in Iraq and just focusing on the situation in Iraq. And I remember what Mr. Pops said; that when he was with the CPA, he said he looked at 52 state-run businesses, government-run businesses in Iraq, and many of these companies he said were dual-use companies. That is, in the front of, say, a fertilizer factory; yes, they were making fertilizer, but in the back it was chemicals. Or in the front of a sheet metal shop; yes, they were doing sheet metal in the front, but it was rockets or rocket launchers in the back. He even mentioned that anthrax grinders were found over there. He made a lot of comments to us that sometimes you just have not read a lot about that.

I thought that was a very interesting part of our experience, talking to people like the Assistant Secretary of the Army, who had been there for some time and actually been on the ground meeting with the people who ran those state-run businesses, to give us a bird's-eye view of what is really happening there.

Something else my colleague mentioned that is worth repeating. In Iraq, of course, we all know that they have these tremendous oil reserves, but their refinery capacity is really quite limited. So they produce the crude oil in Iraq, they send it out of the country, have it refined, bring it back into Iraq, and then they sell it at 13 cents a gallon. Of course, they are losing money selling gasoline. Again, coming out of this Saddam legacy of really a closed economy, it has created tremendous problems for the people of Iraq.

Electricity. Another thing we learned about. Electricity is not paid for by people. So, of course, if you do not pay for a particular commodity, you will tend to utilize more of it. So, of course, they have all kinds of problems with electricity. Lights do not go on, and there were many, many problems there.

We also learned, too, about the damage that Saddam Hussein had wreaked upon his people. Much of it was psychological damage. I think that is one thing our troops and the British learned, that it is difficult for many of the Iraqis to make decisions because their experience had always been that they had to get approval from Baghdad, from the central government. So decisionmaking was not something they were used to, and that is part of this transition from where we are today in this situation in Iraq.

We went through a liberation phase, an occupation phase, and we are now in the third phase. And this is a planned phase of our time in Iraq, is this partnership stage. We are in there now, but as we move and transition to a self-reliant stage, part of that transition really requires helping the Iraqis develop the ability to make decisions once again.

We saw the same thing in the old Eastern Bloc, after the Soviet Union collapsed and the Communist nations became free. Many Western people would go in and say the people had a hard time making decisions. They were never able to do that. And that is kind of what we see in Iraq. And part of our job is to help them, help them make this transition and help them to understand their options and to make decisions.

One other thing worth noting, too, that I find very interesting is that as we met with that Iraqi American Chamber of Commerce, I really enjoyed those conversations. When we were there, too, this whole notion of federalism was a very big issue to the Iraqis, and they were obviously quite concerned about the issue. They were sweating the issue. What do we do

about federalism? And as Americans, you almost have to chuckle a little bit and say, you know, we had a little trouble with federalism ourselves. We set up these Articles of Confederation after the American Revolution. Things did not work out well with the Articles, and we developed the Constitution, which is a great Constitution, a great document, but not a perfect one. We made mistakes. And ultimately the issue of federalism was settled in our country by a Civil War in the 1860s. And to this day we are constantly having debates in this great Chamber about what is the role of the Federal versus the State Government. And my advice to some of the Iraqis there was do not feel as if you are going to get this question of federalism right on the draft. You are going to have to do the best you can.

And I think that is what they did in the document that they adopted. And coming from the State of Pennsylvania, I feel like I have some ability to talk to Iraqis on that issue, given that Philadelphia is the birthplace of American democracy, and of course Pennsylvania is the State where oil was first discovered, in western Pennsylvania. Not Texas, I say to my colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

But nevertheless, I was most impressed again by the trip and that experience, and it is something I will remember for the rest of my life. And having said all that, I yield back to the gentleman from Iowa.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his comments. And in the short time we have left, Mr. Speaker, I now yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CUELLAR).

Mr. CUELLAR. Just one minute more, and I thank my colleague for yielding to me, Mr. Speaker, and then I will let him close after this. Thanks to my colleague from Iowa and also to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

And my colleague was right, the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Dean Pops, we all had different conversations; and if you will recall, one of the conversations that we had was how do we get the free enterprise system to work? How do we get foreign investment to come in? It is hard to attract foreign investment to Iraq if they do not have a constitution or the basic laws, if they do not have some of the basic things we take for granted. In other words, who is the owner of the property? Where is the title to the property? How do you borrow money if you do not have collateral to go in?

So there is a lot of work that needs to be done. But I have a lot of faith in the Iraqi people, and especially having had that opportunity to talk to some of the business people and some of the folks there. It gave me the optimism and the faith that we are doing the right thing. And I think once we finish this mission, then we need to do everything to bring our soldiers back safely to the United States, the men and

women from all across the United States.

And, of course, I have to say that Texas had a large delegation there from San Antonio, Laredo, a couple of the places, New Braunfels. But again I do want to say thank you to the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) for this opportunity, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), and of course our doctor, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS), who also went with us.

This is something that allows us to make better decisions here in Washington, being able to go and see what is happening in Iraq firsthand. So I thank my colleagues.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues. I appreciate their willingness to do this travel, along with my other colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS). I said when we got off that plane that I would go make that trip all over again with you, and I mean that sincerely. It is not always the case.

There are a couple of things that need to be fixed over there, and one of them is the constitution. Get it ratified, have the legitimate election, get the sovereignty established with legitimacy in Iraq so that they can sign contracts, and get that oil developed with foreign capital so that that capital can grow and flow and they can do business across the world. When that happens, the enemy will have to give up and recognize that they have lost.

While that is going on, the Iraqis are taking care of their own security. There is light at the end of this tunnel. There is a bright spot. And the least concern we have is whether our military is doing their job. They are doing their job. And now free enterprise needs to take hold to lift that burden off our military.

So I appreciate my colleagues' involvement here, and my hat's off to the United States military and their efforts over there and all around the world.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. ORTIZ (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today and September 22 on account of district business.

Mr. BARTON of Texas (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today on account of attending a funeral.

Mr. HEFLEY (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of a death in the family.

SPECIAL ORDERS GRANTED

By unanimous consent, permission to address the House, following the legislative program and any special orders heretofore entered, was granted to:

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. BROWN of Ohio, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. CORRINE BROWN of Florida, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. HINCHEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. McDERMOTT, for 5 minutes, today.

(The following Members (at the request of Mr. DUNCAN) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. DUNCAN, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina, for 5 minutes, September 22.

Mr. PAUL, for 5 minutes, September 22.

Mr. POE, for 5 minutes, September 27.

(The following Members (at their own request) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Mr. KIND, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. STUPAK, for 5 minutes, today.

SENATE ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The SPEAKER announced his signature to enrolled bills of the Senate of the following titles:

S. 1340. An act to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to extend the date after which surplus funds in the wildlife restoration fund become available for apportionment.

BILLS PRESENTED TO THE PRESIDENT

Jeff Trandahl, Clerk of the House reports that on September 19, 2005 he presented to the President of the United States, for his approval, the following bills

H.R. 3169. Pell Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act.

H.R. 3668. Student Grant Hurricane and Disaster Relief Act.

H.R. 3672. TANF Emergency Response and Recovery Act of 2005.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 9 o'clock and 26 minutes p.m.), the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, September 22, 2005, at 10 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 8 of rule XII, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

4055. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Agriculture, transmitting a report of a violation of the Antideficiency Act in the Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Direct Loan Financing Account,

Treasury Symbol 12X4208, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 1517(b); to the Committee on Appropriations.

4056. A letter from the Deputy Director, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, transmitting pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, as amended, Transmittal No. 05-39, concerning the Department of the Air Force's proposed Letter(s) of Offer and Acceptance to Singapore for defense articles and services; to the Committee on Armed Services.

4057. A letter from the Attorney Advisor, NHTSA, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Child restraint systems Child restraint systems recordkeeping requirements [Docket No. NHTSA-2005-22324] (RIN: 2127-AI95) received September 12, 2005, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4058. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Department's report entitled "Performance Improvement 2005: Evaluation Activities of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services," pursuant to section 241(b) of the Public Health Service (PHS) Act; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

4059. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting the semiannual report detailing payments made to Cuba as a result of the provision of telecommunications services pursuant to Department of the Treasury specific licenses, as required by Section 1705(e)(6) of the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, 22 U.S.C. 6004(e)(6), as amended by Section 102(g) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 6032; to the Committee on International Relations.

4060. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a six-month periodic report of the national emergency with respect to the Western Balkans that was declared in Executive Order 13219 of June 26, 2001; to the Committee on International Relations.

4061. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the risk of nuclear proliferation created by the accumulation of weapons-usable fissile material in the territory of the Russian Federation that was declared in Executive Order 13159 of June 21, 2000; to the Committee on International Relations.

4062. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National Emergency Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and pursuant to Executive Order 13313 of July 31, 2003, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that was declared in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995; to the Committee on International Relations.

4063. A letter from the Secretary, Department of the Treasury, transmitting as required by section 401(c) of the National