

they can refine their Constitution, and that they can make sure their military has the capability to provide the security.

So when people say, what is our exit strategy? I say it a hundred times, it is very simple. And when they say we do not have an exit strategy, that is simply not true. We have had an exit strategy from day one. It has been revised a few times, but we have had an exit strategy. It has been revised because we underestimated the strength of the insurgency. We underestimated the consequence of disbanding their army, their police and their border patrol; but our strategy is so basic, so simple, and it does not need to be doubted.

Our strategy is to train their police, to train their border patrol, to train their military so they have the capability to keep order. To train their government so that they not only know about majority rule, but minority rights. To give them more time to experience the government, to give them more time to have their military be engaged in a fight with help from the United States. Will we leave? We will leave probably sooner than we should.

□ 2215

In my judgment, Senator MCCAIN and others have been right. We have been understaffed in Iraq. We will leave probably sooner than we should but we will not leave completely because Iraqis will still need logistical support. Their military will not have the cooks, the people who can do the transportation, and all the other things that they need besides that fighting force. They will not have the air power that they will need. And frankly, I do not think they are going to want us to leave from Iraq completely when they have neighbors like Syria, the Turks who fear the Kurds, the Iranians that fear the Kurds and are trying to wrap their arms around the Shias, and the Saudis who do not want democracy to succeed.

When my colleague, the previous speaker, talked about how people predicted bad things, I know darn well that the President of Egypt predicted the election in January would not succeed. He was wrong. He predicted the constitution would not pass and I think he is wrong. And I think it relates more to not the United States but more to the idea that Sunnis are having to give up power in Iraq to Shias, and that is of concern to many.

Have there been other benefits from our being there? I do not think that you would have seen Qadhafi and Libya do a 180 degree turn. It was around the time we captured Saddam Hussein that Qadhafi I think probably thought, you know, I have billions of dollars. Why would I want to end up like Saddam Hussein? Why in the world would I want that to happen? And in Syria even the Israelis were saying the Syrians will not leave Lebanon but they left Lebanon. I do not think they would have left Lebanon if we were not in

Iraq. Fortunately, the Syrians fear we might do something in Syria.

Now to some in my district they think that would be the craziest thing in the world to do something in Syria. No, the craziest thing would be for the Syrians to fear that we would not do something. The craziest thing would be for us to say that we will not do something in Syria. The smartest thing is to keep the Syrians wondering so we can have a change of behavior without using military.

When I met with the Syrian ambassador he said, We want to be your friends. Just tell us what we are doing wrong and we will stop. And I said to the ambassador, Mr. Ambassador, we will not want to tell you the things we know you are doing wrong and then just have you stop the things we know you are doing wrong. We want to you stop even the things we do not know you are doing.

We want you to stop allowing insurgents to come into Damascus who are terrorist bombers who then come into Iraq to blow themselves up. When my colleague said only 10 percent of the insurgency are foreigners. I thought, yes, there are only 10 percent of them but 98 percent of them are bombers, people who blow themselves up. If we could get rid of that 10 percent, we would get rid of 98 percent of the suicide bombers. Most Iraqis do not have any interest in blowing themselves up.

So there is more I could say about Iraq. I am in awe of what our troops have done. I am in awe of the Iraqi men and women that I have met. I believe that most Iraqis who are involved in this government believe they are the Madisons, the Benjamin Franklins, the George Washingtons. They believe they are helping to create a new nation that not unlike its fledgling democracy in the United States, where you could have said, you know, tell me a country that has been a democracy, a country where there have been some States. Tell me a country. You could have used the same argument against the United States. Nobody has it. It is not a natural thing. We in this world have kings and queens and dictators.

Well, what I found at least with the Iraqis is they take to democracy. They love the debate, the dialogue. They love to barter. They love it. And there are a lot of things we could criticize what they have done, but I think in two and a half years they do not need a miracle, but they make me feel like they are doing something that will have unbelievable significance in the long run for peace and prosperity.

PROGRESS IN IRAQ

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

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I have to indicate what an inspiring talk that was that the gentleman from Con-

necticut (Mr. SHAYS) has provided this body and those who all may be tuned in. It was very touching, extremely informative, and most helpful; and it was a pleasure to hear.

As I think about some of the comments that have been said in recent days regarding the Iraqis and the Iraqi government and those people who are trying to become a self-governing people, I am struck and I am brought back, as the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) was, back to the days of this country's battle for independence, and all the naysayers that were around. It is estimated that perhaps less than a third were actually those who were actively involved in seeking independence and truly believed in the cause.

Having been in Iraq earlier this year, after the January elections, having seen what the Iraqis were getting a glimpse of, it is like being a teacher and seeing the light come on with a student. They get it. They understand. Make no mistake, there are corrupt people in Iraq just as there are in America. There have been elections stolen in America. There have been, I am sure, improper voters everywhere there has ever been a vote. But this is truly an awesome historic time.

Could it fail in Iraq? It sure could. Could it fail for sure if we abandon what has been done in the cause for which so many have already given their lives? It sure could. It could fail. And it is heartbreaking when people say, let us just get out before the job is done and let us just get out, meaning that those people who laid down their lives in service to this country, in helping to spread freedom and fighting insurgency and terrorists in other streets so we do not have those fights here in this country, we will, we have, but the major battles have been overseas because the terrorists get it.

They understand once the seed of democracy begins to bloom in the Middle East, then it grows and it spreads seeds that then grow up and democracy spreads because once people get that glimpse of self-government it is an incredible thing. Just like John Adams wrote his wife, Abigail, and explained, the thing that philosophers through the ages have talked about, this idea that people could govern themselves is just within our grasp. Oh, to be living in this time when it is so close within our grasp.

Well, we have been the beneficiaries of that. As I spoke to people in Iraq one gentleman, tears began to come as he talked about how brutal and barbaric it had been in Iraq under Saddam and how because of Saddam's spies that were everywhere, neighbors could no longer trust neighbors. They could not speak what they thought without worrying about somebody turning them in. They could not make anybody mad in the neighborhood because then somebody might enter a false report to get them arrested just out of spite. Even the spies had to be careful because they

were spied on by others. And so it was a paranoid area.

He said neighbors for years had quit speaking to neighbors out of this kind of fear and paranoia, but it was not just paranoia. There were really people out to get them in order to move up. I know having spent a summer in the Soviet Union, it was the Soviet Union when I was there back in 1973. I had asked one of the Soviet students when somebody rushed out of a room, I said, Where is that person going? He said, She is going to tell on me because in your country maybe money helps advance you, but in my country the only way you get anywhere is to step on other people on the way up.

That is the way it was in Iraq. You stepped on other people to move forward, and it was a terrible time to live in. And this man, as tears welled up, he said on the day of the election neighbors that had not spoken for years, they came out, they held hands and they walked to the polls together to vote.

Now, anybody that would seek to demean the great things that have already been accomplished that has put the self-government within these people's grasp so that the seed of democracy might grow and flourish and develop and spread to the surrounding countries, is just intolerable. There are great things that have occurred. There are people who have laid down their lives so this could happen. There are people who have laid down their lives in service to this country. There are people that have been wounded and hurt. And as the speaker said, we have visited those people, we have been with families at funerals and it is heart-breaking. But there is a seed of freedom and democracy and the potential for self-government that has been granted.

Now, comparisons continue even tonight to be made by a colleague across the aisle who wants to compare this to Saigon. This is not Vietnam. Iraq is not Vietnam. It is completely different. That advisory action where we had advisors in Vietnam that was escalated by President Kennedy and then escalated further into a full war even though it was called police action by President Johnson, and then was ultimately, even though he is no hero of mine, President Nixon did get us out of Vietnam. I am not pleased with the way it was done, but people were made to die for nothing. But they did not die for nothing. They died for the ideal that man was created by their creator with God-given rights. They did not die for some wishy-washy government in Washington.

Now, this election in Iraq and what is going on over there is historic. It is awesome. It is being done by valiant people to demean what has been done and the lives that have been sacrificed, even by Iraqis, is simply inappropriate, excessive political exuberance at the cost of truth, honesty and dignity.

Now, the naysaying brutality that is being heard verbalizing this idea that

we should have our head in the sand is simply inappropriate. I was grilled by some Al-Jazeera reporters. They said, You must have been upset by the January elections. Your candidate was not elected. I said, We were not here about a president. We were here about a process, that you would govern yourself, and you would select your own president.

□ 2230

It is not about a president. It is about a process. And they began to see.

And some of the Sunnis had said, you know, we were told by our leaders not to vote; that, for one thing, the vote would not come off because of all the violence, and we saw that did not happen. People did vote anyway. We were also told it would be a fraud, that the Americans would use this as a way to install their puppet government. But that did not happen. The guy that was most friendly to the United States got third place. We saw, wow, this was a real election and we missed it. We are not going to let that happen again.

And even though it may not have been a majority of the Sunnis, the Sunnis bravely came out and voted. And they voted knowing even still their religious leaders were speaking against it.

I was able to relate to the Al-Jazeera and some of the Iraqis present with a story that can be depicted in the beautiful huge portrait outside this very floor of the Constitutional Convention with Chairman Washington standing there. The story that was told was of Benjamin Franklin sitting there, as depicted in his chair at the Constitutional Convention after they had come up with a document, finally. And he said, you know, I have been looking at that half of a sun engraved on the back of your chair trying to decide through the process of this convention if that was a rising sun or that was a setting sun, and now I believe it is a rising sun. And I related to the Iraqi reporters, I believe what I am seeing in this country is a rising sun.

It is an incredible day in the history of mankind that in the area where many believe the cradle of mankind existed, where mankind started, for the first time in thousands of years that area is about to govern themselves. We have done a great thing.

There are things that I have heard right here on this floor that I might disagree with our President over, but I thank God that he has stayed the course. Because if the seed of freedom and self-government is allowed to grow and flourish in Iraq, it will spread with other seeds. We are already seeing that, as the gentleman from Connecticut pointed out, in surrounding areas, if we stay the course long enough to let them take over, let them govern. We have trained their policemen. We are training their soldiers, and they are nearly ready to take over. What a glorious day that will be for them. They are not going to agree with

us on many things, but they will be a free people and they will understand that freedom.

I thank God that in the late 1700s, 1776 to 1789, that the naysayers that said how stupid this was, that those in France who were the naysayers to this gentleman, Lafayette, who really saw something in the potential for these colonies in America, I thank God, the very God we see inscribed above the Speaker's chair, where it says "In God we trust," I thank that God that the naysayers did not prevail; that the naysayers, those with their heads in the sand, the negative people, that they did not prevail. Thank goodness that freedom won out.

And I am praying to that same God that it prevails in the Middle East, despite the naysaying of those who would be heard even in this body itself. And, Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to have had the opportunity to have addressed this issue this evening.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. BECERRA (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today.

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 Ms. WOOLSEY) to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material:)

Ms. KAPTUR, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. CUMMINGS, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. SHUSTER, for 5 minutes, October 19.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey, for 5 minutes, October 19.

Mr. MARCHANT, for 5 minutes, October 19.

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

Mr. DENT, for 5 minutes, today.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

Mr. Trandahl, Clerk of the House, reported and found truly enrolled a bill of the House of the following title, which was thereupon signed by the Speaker:

H.R. 3765. An act to extend through March 31, 2006, the authority of the Secretary of the Army to accept and expend funds contributed by non-Federal public entities and to expedite the processing of permits.