

cabinet agencies and officials and U.S. Congress to restore regular beef trade.

Despite the efforts of even the highest office in our nation's government, Japan continues to keep American beef out of their country.

The Japanese Food Safety Commission and others within the government have repeatedly demanded excessive documentation and paperwork with little or no justification. None of these requests reflect the internationally accepted phytosanitary guidelines. Rather, they appear to be a dilatory tool to prevent any effort to resume the purchase of American beef.

There have been claims that American beef is unsafe. This is simply not true. The international science says our cattle under 30 months of age are safe and not at risk. Yet, we have agreed to not send meat from any animals under 20 months of age to Japan.

Furthermore, after 20 confirmed cases of BSE in Japan, the claim that U.S. beef is not as safe as Japanese beef is simply an insult to American producers. Still the market remains closed to the U.S.

In recent weeks, Japan has insisted upon an unwarranted and unjustified trade barrier by preventing the resumption of regular beef trade with the U.S. Japan has a complicated bureaucracy in place to deal with the issue of BSE. In 2003, the Japanese Parliament established the Food Safety Commission as a Cabinet Office tasked with ensuring food safety.

This week, the Japanese Food Safety Commission again failed to reach an agreement to remove the blockade to U.S. beef imports. And to insult to injury, four of the Commission's 12 members did not even show up to the meeting because of their alleged concern with the safety of U.S. beef.

I am troubled that our negotiations with Japan have deteriorated to this point. Japan has traditionally been a distinguished and important trading partner for the U.S. Furthermore, they have been a critical ally in the War on terrorism.

Despite, this long-standing relationship, I am here today to support legislation that requires the U.S. Department of Treasury to implement additional tariffs on goods grown, produced or manufactured in Japan unless the U.S. Trade Representative certifies that Japan has reopened its market to American beef by December 15, 2005.

I have long supported free trade. Our country has benefitted from trade agreements with Chile, Australia, Canada and Mexico, and now Central America. These trading relationships are a necessity to ensure the ability of American farmers, ranchers and businessmen alike to compete in the global marketplace.

But, these agreements hinge heavily upon the commitment of the participating countries to uphold the principles of free trade—and for agriculture trade that means abiding by the international science standards that set im-

portant standards for animal, plant and human safety.

Prior to the discovery of a case of native-born BSE in a cow that never entered the food supply, we enjoyed this kind of trading relationship with Japan. However, Japan has chosen to ignore internationally recognized science and has instead based their food safety on emotional, politically-driven arguments. And, this comes at a high price for the American beef industry.

Since December 2003, the U.S. beef industry has experienced roughly \$6 billion in cumulative economic losses—in current annual economic trade terms, this is about \$3.1 billion a year.

We've been patient, but with this kind of economic loss, the American beef industry cannot afford to wait any longer.

I will not stand idly by while politics and posturing drive our trade relationships.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to send a message in the strongest way possible, that free trade is a two-way street. More importantly, in the context of the pending negotiations in the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization, I urge my colleagues to support this bill because it sends the message to American producers that we will stand up for American agriculture in our trade negotiations.

THE PATH FORWARD

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a recent speech I delivered on Iraq printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[October 26, 2005]

“THE PATH FORWARD”

(Georgetown University)

A few weeks ago I departed Iraq from Mosul. Three Senators and staff were gathered in the forward part of a C-130. In the middle of the cavernous cargo hold was a simple, aluminum coffin with a small American flag draped over it. We were bringing another American soldier home to his family and final resting place.

The starkness of his coffin in the center of the hold, the silence except for the din of the engines, was a real time cold reminder of the consequences of decisions for which we Senators share responsibility.

As we arrived in Kuwait, a larger flag was transferred to fully cover his coffin and we joined graves registration personnel in giving him an honor guard as he was ceremoniously carried from the plane to a waiting truck. When the doors clunked shut, I wondered why all of America would not be allowed to see him arrive at Dover Air Force Base instead of hiding him from a nation that deserves to mourn together in truth and in the light of day. His lonely journey compels all of us to come to grips with our choices in Iraq.

Now more than 2,000 brave Americans have given their lives, and several hundred thousand more have done everything in their power to wade through the ongoing internal civil strife in Iraq. An Iraq which increas-

ingly is what it was not before the war—a breeding ground for homegrown terrorists and a magnet for foreign terrorists. We are entering a make or break six month period, and I want to talk about the steps we must take if we hope to bring our troops home within a reasonable timeframe from an Iraq that's not permanently torn by irrepressible conflict.

It is never easy to discuss what has gone wrong while our troops are in constant danger. I know this dilemma first-hand. After serving in war, I returned home to offer my own personal voice of dissent. I did so because I believed strongly that we owed it to those risking their lives to speak truth to power. We still do.

In fact, while some say we can't ask tough questions because we are at war, I say no—in a time of war we must ask the hardest questions of all. It's essential if we want to correct our course and do what's right for our troops instead of repeating the same mistakes over and over again. No matter what the President says, asking tough questions isn't pessimism, it's patriotism.

Our troops have served with stunning bravery and resolve. The nobility of their service to country can never be diminished by the mistakes of politicians. American families who have lost, or who fear the loss, of their loved ones deserve to know the truth about what we have asked them to do, what we are doing to complete the mission, and what we are doing to prevent our forces from being trapped in an endless quagmire.

Some people would rather not have that discussion. They'd rather revise and rewrite the story of our involvement in Iraq for the history books. Tragically, that's become standard fare from an administration that doesn't acknowledge facts generally, whether they are provided by scientists, whistleblowers, journalists, military leaders, or the common sense of every citizen. At a time when many worry that we have become a society of moral relativists, too few worry that we have a government of factual relativists.

Let's be straight about Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who deserves his own special place in hell. But that was not the reason America went to war.

The country and the Congress were misled into war. I regret that we were not given the truth; as I said more than a year ago, knowing what we know now, I would not have gone to war in Iraq. And knowing now the full measure of the Bush Administration's duplicity and incompetence, I doubt there are many members of Congress who would give them the authority they abused so badly. I know I would not. The truth is, if the Bush Administration had come to the United States Senate and acknowledged there was no “slam dunk case” that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, acknowledged that Iraq was not connected to 9/11, there never would have even been a vote to authorize the use of force—just as there's no vote today to invade North Korea, Iran, Cuba, or a host of regimes we rightfully despise.

I understand that as much as we might wish it, we can't rewind the tape of history. There is, as Robert Kennedy once said, 'enough blame to go around,' and I accept my share of the responsibility. But the mistakes of the past, no matter who made them, are no justification for marching ahead into a future of miscalculations and misjudgments and the loss of American lives with no end in sight. We each have a responsibility, to our country and our conscience, to be honest about where we should go from here. It is time for those of us who believe in a better course to say so plainly and unequivocally.

We are where we are. The President's fliprant “bring it on” taunt to the insurgents

has found a meaning beyond his wildest expectations, a painful reality for troops who went for too long without protective armor. We have traded a dictator for a chaos that has left America less secure, and the mission the President once declared accomplished remains perilously incomplete.

To set a new course, we must be strong, smart, and honest. As we learned painfully during the Vietnam War, no president can sustain a war without the support of the American people. In the case of Iraq, their patience is frayed and nearly to the breaking point because Americans will not tolerate our troops giving their lives without a clear strategy, and will not tolerate vague platitudes or rosy scenarios when real answers are urgently needed.

It's time for leaders to be honest that if we do not change course, there is the prospect of indefinite, even endless conflict—a fate untenable for our troops, and a future unacceptable to the American people and the Iraqis who pray for the day when a stable Iraq will belong to Iraqis alone.

The path forward will not be easy. The administration's incompetence and unwillingness to listen has made the task that much harder, and reduced what we can expect to accomplish. But there is a way forward that gives us the best chance both to salvage a difficult situation in Iraq, and to save American and Iraqi lives. With so much at stake, we must follow it.

We must begin by acknowledging that our options in Iraq today are not what they should be, or could have been.

The reason is simple. This Administration hitched their wagon to ideologues, excluding those who dared to tell the truth, even leaders of their own party and the uniformed military.

When after September 11th, flags flew from porches across America and foreign newspaper headlines proclaimed "We're all Americans now," the Administration could have kept the world united, but they chose not to. And they were wrong. Instead, they pushed allies away, isolated America, and lost leverage we desperately need today.

When they could have demanded and relied on accurate instead of manipulated intelligence, they chose not to. They were wrong—and instead they sacrificed our credibility at home and abroad.

When they could have given the inspectors time to discover whether Saddam Hussein actually had weapons of mass destruction, when they could have paid attention to Ambassador Wilson's report, they chose not to. And they were wrong. Instead they attacked him, and they attacked his wife to justify attacking Iraq. We don't know yet whether this will prove to be an indictable offense in a court of law, but for it, and for misleading a nation into war, they will be indicted in the high court of history. History will judge the invasion of Iraq one of the greatest foreign policy misadventures of all time.

But the mistakes were not limited to the decision to invade. They mounted, one upon another.

When they could have listened to General Shinseki and put in enough troops to maintain order, they chose not to. They were wrong. When they could have learned from George Herbert Walker Bush and built a genuine global coalition, they chose not to. They were wrong. When they could have implemented a detailed State Department plan for reconstructing post-Saddam Iraq, they chose not to. And they were wrong again. When they could have protected American forces by guarding Saddam Hussein's ammo dumps where there were weapons of individual destruction, they exposed our young men and women to the ammo that now maims and kills them because they chose

not to act. And they were wrong. When they could have imposed immediate order and structure in Baghdad after the fall of Saddam, Rumsfeld shrugged his shoulders, said Baghdad was safer than Washington, D.C. and chose not to act. He was wrong. When the Administration could have kept an Iraqi army selectively intact, they chose not to. They were wrong. When they could have kept an entire civil structure functioning to deliver basic services to Iraqi citizens, they chose not to. They were wrong. When they could have accepted the offers of the United Nations and individual countries to provide on the ground peacekeepers and reconstruction assistance, they chose not to. They were wrong. When they should have leveled with the American people that the insurgency had grown, they chose not to. Vice President Cheney even absurdly claimed that the "insurgency was in its last throes." He was wrong.

Now after all these mistakes, the Administration accuses anyone who proposes a better course of wanting to cut and run. But we are in trouble today precisely because of a policy of cut and run. This administration made the wrong choice to cut and run from sound intelligence and good diplomacy; to cut and run from the best military advice; to cut and run from sensible war time planning; to cut and run from their responsibility to properly arm and protect our troops; to cut and run from history's lessons about the Middle East; to cut and run from common sense.

And still today they cut and run from the truth.

This difficult road traveled demands the unvarnished truth about the road ahead.

To those who suggest we should withdraw all troops immediately—I say No. A precipitous withdrawal would invite civil and regional chaos and endanger our own security. But to those who rely on the overly simplistic phrase "we will stay as long as it takes," who pretend this is primarily a war against Al Qaeda, and who offer halting, sporadic, diplomatic engagement, I also say—No, that will only lead us into a quagmire.

The way forward in Iraq is not to pull out precipitously or merely promise to stay "as long as it takes." To undermine the insurgency, we must instead simultaneously pursue both a political settlement and the withdrawal of American combat forces linked to specific, responsible benchmarks. At the first benchmark, the completion of the December elections, we can start the process of reducing our forces by withdrawing 20,000 troops over the course of the holidays.

The Administration must immediately give Congress and the American people a detailed plan for the transfer of military and police responsibilities on a sector by sector basis to Iraqis so the majority of our combat forces can be withdrawn. No more shell games, no more false reports of progress, but specific and measurable goals.

It is true that our soldiers increasingly fight side by side with Iraqis willing to put their lives on the line for a better future. But history shows that guns alone do not end an insurgency. The real struggle in Iraq—Sunni versus Shia—will only be settled by a political solution, and no political solution can be achieved when the antagonists can rely on the indefinite large scale presence of occupying American combat troops.

In fact, because we failed to take advantage of the momentum of our military victory, because we failed to deliver services and let Iraqis choose their leaders early on, our military presence in vast and visible numbers has become part of the problem, not the solution.

And our generals understand this. General George Casey, our top military commander

in Iraq, recently told Congress that our large military presence "feeds the notion of occupation" and "extends the amount of time that it will take for Iraqi security forces to become self-reliant." And Richard Nixon's Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, breaking a thirty year silence, writes, "Our presence is what feeds the insurgency, and our gradual withdrawal would feed the confidence and the ability of average Iraqis to stand up to the insurgency." No wonder the Sovereignty Committee of the Iraqi Parliament is already asking for a timetable for withdrawal of our troops; without this, Iraqis believe Iraq will never be its own country.

We must move aggressively to reduce popular support for the insurgency fed by the perception of American occupation. An open-ended declaration to stay 'as long as it takes' lets Iraqi factions maneuver for their own political advantage by making us stay as long as they want, and it becomes an excuse for billions of American tax dollars to be sent to Iraq and siphoned off into the coffers of cronyism and corruption.

It will be hard for this Administration, but it is essential to acknowledge that the insurgency will not be defeated unless our troop levels are drawn down, starting immediately after successful elections in December. The draw down of troops should be tied not to an arbitrary timetable, but to a specific timetable for transfer of political and security responsibility to Iraqis and realignment of our troop deployment. That timetable must be real and strict. The goal should be to withdraw the bulk of American combat forces by the end of next year. If the Administration does its work correctly, that is achievable.

Our strategy must achieve a political solution that deprives the Sunni-dominated insurgency of support by giving the Sunnis a stake in the future of their country. The Constitution, opposed by more than two thirds of Sunnis, has postponed and even exacerbated the fundamental crisis of Iraq. The Sunnis want a strong secular national government that fairly distributes oil revenues. Shiites want to control their own region and resources in a loosely united Islamic state. And Kurds simply want to be left alone. Until sufficient compromise is hammered out, a Sunni base cannot be created that isolates the hard core Baathists and jihadists and defuses the insurgency.

The Administration must use all of the leverage in America's arsenal—our diplomacy, the presence of our troops, and our reconstruction money—to convince Shiites and Kurds to address legitimate Sunni concerns and to make Sunnis accept the reality that they will no longer dominate Iraq. We cannot and should not do this alone.

The Administration must bring to the table the full weight of all of Iraq's Sunni neighbors. They also have a large stake in a stable Iraq. Instead of just telling us that Iraq is falling apart, as the Saudi foreign minister did recently, they must do their part to put it back together. We've proven ourselves to be a strong ally to many nations in the region. Now it's their turn to do their part.

The administration must immediately call a conference of Iraq's neighbors, Britain, Turkey and other key NATO allies, and Russia. All of these countries have influence and ties to various parties in Iraq. Together, we must implement a collective strategy to bring the parties in Iraq to a sustainable political compromise. This must include obtaining mutual security guarantees among Iraqis themselves. Shiite and Kurdish leaders need to make a commitment not to perpetrate a bloodbath against Sunnis in the post-election period. In turn, Sunni leaders must end support for the insurgents, including those who are targeting Shiites. And the

Kurds must explicitly commit themselves not to declare independence.

To enlist the support of Iraq's Sunni neighbors, we should commit to a new regional security structure that strengthens the security of the countries in the region and the wider community of nations. This requires a phased process including improved security assistance programs, joint exercises, and participation by countries both outside and within the Middle East.

Ambassador Khalilzad is doing a terrific job trying broker a better deal between the Iraqi parties. But he can't do it alone. The President should immediately appoint a high level envoy to maximize our diplomacy in Iraq and the region.

Showing Sunnis the benefits that await them if they continue to participate in the process of building Iraq can go a long way toward achieving stability. We should press these countries to set up a reconstruction fund specifically for the majority Sunni areas. It's time for them to deliver on their commitments to provide funds to Iraq. Even short-term improvements, like providing electricity and supplying diesel fuel—an offer that the Saudis have made but have yet to fulfill—can make a real difference.

We need to jump start our own lagging reconstruction efforts by providing the necessary civilian personnel to do the job, standing up civil-military reconstruction teams throughout the country, streamlining the disbursement of funds to the provinces so they can deliver services, expanding job creation programs, and strengthening the capacity of government ministries.

We must make it clear now that we do not want permanent military bases in Iraq, or a large combat force on Iraqi soil indefinitely. And as we withdraw our combat troops, we should be prepared to keep a substantially reduced level of American forces in Iraq, at the request of the Iraqi government, for the purpose of training their security forces. Some combat ready American troops will still be needed to safeguard the Americans engaged in that training, but they should be there to do that and to provide a back stop to Iraqi efforts, not to do the fighting for Iraqis.

Simultaneously, the President needs to put the training of Iraqi security forces on a six month wartime footing and ensure that the Iraqi government has the budget to deploy them. The Administration must stop using the requirement that troops be trained in-country as an excuse for refusing offers made by Egypt, Jordan, France and Germany to do more.

This week, long standing suspicions of Syrian complicity in destabilizing Lebanon were laid bare by the community of nations. And we know Syria has failed to take the aggressive steps necessary to stop former Baathists and foreign fighters from using its territory as a transit route into Iraq. The Administration must prod the new Iraqi government to ask for a multinational force to help protect Iraq's borders until a capable national army is formed. Such a force, if sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council, could attract participation by Iraq's neighbors and countries like India and would be a critical step in stemming the tide of insurgents and money into Iraq.

Finally, and without delay, we must fundamentally alter the deployment of American troops. While Special Operations must continue to pursue specific intelligence leads, the vast majority of our own troops should be in rear guard, garrisoned status for security backup. We do not need to send young Americans on search and destroy missions that invite alienation and deepen the risks they face. Iraqis should police Iraqis. Iraqis should search Iraqi homes. Iraqis should stand up for Iraq.

We will never be as safe as we should be if Iraq continues to distract us from the most important war we must win—the war on Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda, and the terrorists that are resurfacing even in Afghanistan. These are the make or break months for Iraq. The President must take a new course, and hold Iraqis accountable. If the President still refuses, Congress must insist on a change in policy. If we do take these steps, there is no reason this difficult process can not be completed in 12-15 months. There is no reason Iraq cannot be sufficiently stable, no reason the majority of our combat troops can't soon be on their way home, and no reason we can't take on a new role in Iraq, as an ally not an occupier, training Iraqis to defend themselves. Only then will we have provided leadership equal to our soldiers' sacrifice—and that is what they deserve.

There are many factors that contribute to this gap, including disincentives, transportation issues, and outdated stereotypes about people with disabilities. But the end result is unfortunate and unacceptable. Most people with disabilities want to work; they want to be self-supporting and independent. As a government and as a society, we need to encourage employers to hire people with disabilities. We need to support creative job accommodations so we expand employment opportunities.

Misconceptions and apprehensions about hiring people with physical or mental disabilities continue to exist as a barrier to progress. We need to get out the truth, which is that most workers with disabilities require no special accommodations, while the cost for those who do is often minimal. Moreover, research amply shows that employees with disabilities have above-average records in attendance, job dependability, performance, and safety.

Breaking down these persistent attitudinal barriers requires a cooperative, sustained, and consistent effort. A new generation of young people with disabilities is growing up in America today—graduating from high school, going to college, and preparing to participate fully in the workplace. These young people have a right to make the most of their potential. Likewise, America must make the most of their intellect, talents, and abilities.

So this month, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of National Disability Employment Month, let us rededicate ourselves to breaking down the workplace barriers—physical and psychological—that continue to stand in the way of people with disabilities. Our goal must be to make the American dream accessible to all Americans.

HONORING THE SERVICE OF BARBARA BERGER

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I would like to honor a remarkable individual today on the occasion of her retirement from the U.S. Senate Recording Studio. Barbara Berger, or Barb, as she is known here in the Senate, is celebrating her last day of a career spanning 33 years. Barb has been here longer than any Senator save four. She has seen 320 Senators come and go from this body and served under 13 Sergeants-At-Arms. Not only has she seen many of us come and go, she has also witnessed the astounding technological transformation in media that has occurred in the past three decades. In 1972, when Barb began as a receptionist in the front office of the Recording Studio, radio and film were the only mediums of communication available to the Senate, and floor proceedings were not televised yet.

I haven't been here as long as some of my colleagues, but over the past 7 years, Barb has been the gracious smile and distinguished and professional face

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT MONTH

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, this October marks the 60th anniversary of National Disability Employment Awareness Month, and gives us an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the contributions that employees with disabilities have made to the American workforce.

The effort to help our fellow Americans understand these important contributions began in 1945, when Congress designated the first week in October each year as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week. In 1962, the name was changed to include all employees with disabilities. And, in 1988, Congress expanded the designated week to a full month, and changed the name to National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is a time to celebrate the progress we have made in opening the doors of opportunity for individuals with disabilities. People with disabilities—as all people—have unique abilities, talents, and aptitudes. And there is no question that our nation is better, fairer, and richer when we make full use of those gifts.

This July, our Nation celebrated the 15th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act—the landmark civil rights law securing the rights of people with disabilities. As the chief sponsor of the ADA in Congress, I remember the day it was signed into law—June 26, 1990—as one of the proudest in my entire legislative career. And, just as many predicted, the ADA has taken its place among the great civil rights laws in our Nation's history. Today, the impact of the ADA is all around us, in countless facets of our daily lives.

Yet we still have much work to do to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities. Long-term employment, career advancement, and equal pay continue to be challenging for many workers with disabilities. Most importantly, we need to improve the employment rate of persons with disabilities. The gap between the employment rates of working-age people with and without disabilities was more than 40 percentage points in 2004.