

enough to ensure that in the future the insurgents and terrorists do not take hold in Iraq.

It is time for our military presence in the Middle East to be converted to a powerful quick-reaction force outside of Iraq. 80 percent of Iraqis want us out of their country and 47 percent say killing Americans is justified.

Then, we should reallocate the funds being spent in Iraq, which dwarfs the combined budgets of all other programs in place to fight terrorism, and re-engage with the countries around the world that rallied behind us in the wake of 9/11 but were alienated by our conduct in Iraq.

Some have suggested that taking the target off the backs of our troops by removing them from the center of this conflict would lead to chaos. Implicit in that critique is the suggestion that we don't have chaos today. Our troops' presence there, I believe, is allowing Iraq's citizens a convenient excuse for failing to take responsibility for their destiny.

The Iraqi people clearly would like us to leave and permit them to govern. Our troops have expressed the same sentiment. And it is clear that if we are to reclaim our place on the world stage as a unifying force for democratic values and the ideals of our country, the way to start is to redeploy so we can be ready for future challenges.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT (BOB)
LECLERCQ

HON. THADDEUS G. McCOTTER

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Mr. McCOTTER. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor and acknowledge Robert (Bob) Leclercq as he completes his distinguished career as a firefighter in Garden City, Michigan.

Bob has dedicated his life to helping the citizens of Michigan. Upon graduation from East Garden City High School in 1970, he joined the National Guard as a Medical Corpsman in the Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, Unit 2077, of Detroit. Bob began his career as a firefighter in Garden City on October 30, 1979. During 23 years of honorable and dedicated service, he advanced through the ranks from Firefighter to Engineer to Lieutenant and ultimately to Captain.

For two decades, Bob has vigorously pursued additional education and specialized training, including Advanced Firefighting, EMT Specialist, Pump Operator, and Hazardous Materials courses. He has also served as Trustee, Secretary, and currently as President on the International Association of Fire Fighters, Local 1911 Executive Board. In addition, Bob started two beneficial community programs: one, which teaches CPR classes; the second, which takes blood pressures at the senior tower. In 1986, the Jaycees recognized Bob's contributions with the Michigan's Top Ten Outstanding Young People Award.

At this milestone in Bob's life, let us reflect upon the decades of his dedication; let us remember the scores of lives which have been touched by his benevolence; and let us not forget the bravery and courage with which he served and protected. His friends and family are inspired by his accomplishments, honored by his loyalty, and ennobled by his exemplary love for neighbor and community.

Mr. Speaker—Bob's wife, Brenda, his children, Bob Jr. and Sherri, and his grandson, Drake, have ample reason to celebrate. In honor of his commitment to protecting all the citizens of Michigan and of his legendary dedication to improving the lives of Garden City residents, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Bob for his years of service to our community and our country.

DECLARING THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL PREVAIL IN THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, this resolution will not ensure any success in Iraq. It will not bring our troops home. It will only signal the death of true, honest debate within the walls of this great Chamber.

For many more years than any of us have been alive, this House, the People's House, has been democracy's citadel for intelligent, meaningful, real debate that has led to solutions to some of history's most important and vexing crises.

The charade that many on this floor are attempting to pass as a debate today does a great disservice to those monumental American leaders who have spoken from this same floor over the past two centuries. It does a great disservice to the American public, which expects its leaders to lead, not pander. And it does a great disservice to our military men and women who are depending on us to work together and complete our mission so that they may complete their mission and come home. Today's so called debate is politics at its worst—we're playing politics while U.S. men and women are being killed, wounded and kept away from their families.

Mr. Speaker, I remember lying in a military hospital bed just home from Vietnam while Congress played politics—it was disdainful then and when I think of those brave men and women I've visited at Walter Reed Hospital, Bethesda Hospital and Ramstein Hospital in Germany—it makes me sick today. Let's do our job and bring our troops home as soon as possible.

For weeks we have been told, and the American people have been promised, by the Republican majority that there would be a debate on this floor on the Iraq war. Instead, we get what the news is reporting as "Republican election year strategy." Mr. Speaker, this charade represents a shameless dereliction of our duties and a missed opportunity to provide the American public with the open and honest debate they have been demanding for the past 3 long years now.

This feel-good resolution ignores the issues most important to the men and women serving in Iraq, their families and the taxpayers who have already been billed nearly half a trillion dollars.

It ignores the issues raised by some of our most respected generals. Just listen to what a few have said about the Administration's rush to war:

"We are paying the price for the lack of credible planning, or the lack of a plan."—General Anthony Zinni

"What we are living with now is the consequences of successive policy failures."—Lieutenant General Greg Newbold

"They pressed for open warfare before the diplomacy was finished. It was a tragic mistake. It's a strategic blunder."—General Wesley Clark

This resolution ignores the lack of accountability and oversight that's led to some of the most egregious and embarrassing examples of waste, fraud and abuse on record, such as: \$9 billion in missing reconstruction funds.

\$263 million in excessive or unsubstantiated costs for importing gasoline into Iraq.

Over \$20 million for items that weren't delivered, including:

Security for civilian flights at Baghdad International Airport that never occurred; non-existent pipeline employees; old and broken down trucks; spray-painted Iraqi cranes passed off as new; police trucks; and a refurbished police academy and library. And millions more have been wasted at taxpayer expense due to no-bid and over-billed contracts awarded by the Bush administration.

This resolution ignores how the civilian leadership of the Defense Department grossly miscalculated the armor and equipment needs of our troops before sending them into combat, which resulted in:

40,000 troops who didn't have basic Kevlar vests or the ceramic plates needed for full protection, which left parents and spouses to buy body armor for their loved ones;

30,000 Marines who needed twice as many heavy machine guns, more fully protected armored vehicles and more communications equipment to perform their operations successfully;

Soldiers who were issued boots with cheap and soft soles that quickly wore out, thus having to sew material to the bottom of their boots out of desperation;

Soldiers who went to combat with inadequate or poor field radios, ammo carriers, weapon lubricant, socks and even rifle slings;

Military units that were deployed without the necessary armor needed to protect ground vehicles, making them vulnerable to IEDs. And when our troops jerry-rigged them with steel playing, they often flipped or rolled-over, injuring or killing soldiers;

And soldiers who subsequently had to sift through garbage dumps for scrap metal to uparmor ground vehicles.

Mr. Speaker, if you are in charge, you are responsible. That is why several respected generals have cast a vote of no confidence with our civilian leadership of the Defense Department for its lack of planning:

Rumsfeld and his team turned what should have been a deliberate victory in Iraq into a prolonged challenge.—Major General John Batiste.

I do not believe Secretary Rumsfeld is the right person to fight that war, based on his absolute failures in managing the war against Saddam in Iraq.—Major General Charles H. Swannack, Jr.

They only need the military advice when it satisfies their agenda.—Lieutenant General John Riggs

If I was President I would have relieved him three years ago.—Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper

Two and a half more years of that leadership was too long for my nation, for my Army, and for my family.—Major General Paul Eaton

Mr. Speaker, we need to be working non-stop to bring our troops home as soon as possible, not to score political points while they

are fighting a war. And we need to be working to keep them as safe as possible until they are home.

For starters, we need to send a loud message to the insurgents that we will not occupy Iraq and that we will not control Iraq's oil—a message that we want to leave Iraq as much as they want us to leave. Instead, Mr. Speaker, the President has given every impression that the U.S. military has become an occupying force. We are in the process of building a gigantic new U.S. embassy in Baghdad that will span 104 acres, the size of nearly 80 football fields. This does not give the impression that we are winding things down in Iraq. It says to insurgents that we want a permanent military presence and it serves as a recruiting tool to sign up more insurgents. Moreover, it provides no incentives for the Iraqi government to assume more responsibility for the security of its country.

On my last visit to Iraq everyone I spoke with—privates, sergeants and the officers in charge of training the Iraqi security forces—want the Iraqis to assume more of the security responsibilities. Our military has done its job—more often than not in two, three or four tours of deployment—an unconscionable demand on our troops, an unconscionable demand on their families and an unconscionable demand on their communities. And make no mistake—it's taking a toll on our military. Continuous deployment in Iraq has hurt military personnel and their families, and strained recruiting and retention. Consider some of the latest statistics on active duty personnel and selected reserves as well as on recruiting and retention:

Each month the equivalent of one battalion is lost due to deaths and wounds.

All the Army's available active duty combat brigades have served at least a 12-month tour in Iraq or Afghanistan.

At least half of those combat brigades have completed their second tour of duty.

By next year the Army projects that it will be short 3,500 active duty officers, primarily captains and majors.

Approximately 3,500 airmen, as well as sailors, are currently performing Army missions they were not adequately trained to do.

Ninety-seven percent of the National Guard combat and special operations battalions have been mobilized since September 11th.

The average tour for National Guard members is 342 days.

Continuous deployment has damaged readiness for mission skills necessary in the war on terror outside those required in Iraq. Consider some of the latest statistics:

Forty percent of all the Army's and Marine Corps' ground equipment is deployed to Iraq. That equipment is wearing out 2 to 9 times its peacetime rate.

Humvees that are designed for 14 years of operation needs are being overhauled or replaced in just 3 years.

The Army has lost over 100 tanks and armored vehicles and over 1,000 vehicles since the start of the war.

If the war in Iraq ended today, it would take the Army more than 2 years to repair or replace its damaged equipment.

The Marine Corps has determined that equipment deployed to Iraq has suffered such significant damage and wear and tear that 80 percent of it will need to be replaced.

In excess of \$50 billion is needed to repair and replace equipment damaged or lost in Iraq for the Army and Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, stay the course is not a strategy for success and we're not doing our job by being a rubber stamp for the Administration. Each day, it becomes more apparent that the Administration does not have, nor has it ever had, a clear, concise and realistic strategy for ending large scale U.S. involvement in Iraq. The American people deserve a clear explanation of what we are doing in Iraq. They deserve to know what the President is going to do to reduce the incredible physical, emotional and financial burden that all Americans are bearing. If this Congress and the President expect the American people to continue making these sacrifices, then there must be a strategy for success.

Mr. Speaker, we must set the bar and identify what it will take for us to accomplish the mission in Iraq. When the Iraqi people conclude the process of amending their constitution, or by September 30, 2006, we must begin the process of redeployment as soon as practicable. This is a workable approach that tracks a timeline set by the Administration. That is why I have introduced H. Con. Res. 348, which would do just that. This legislation is a bipartisan, comprehensive plan to redeploy American forces out of Iraq and send a clear message to the Iraqi people that the United States has no plans to be a permanent occupying force and we have no designs on Iraqi oil. Six Republicans have signed onto this bill. This bipartisan measure has been introduced in the Senate (S. Con. Res. 93), making it the only bicameral approach to Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I did not support the President's plan to invade Iraq. I considered it to be an unnecessary distraction from hunting down those responsible for the attacks of September 11th. But, as the U.S. has entered its fourth year in Iraq, this is where we are and now we must find a rational and reasonable way out of this mess.

Mr. Speaker, this is not an honest debate about this important issue and while the majority plays politics our men and women serving in Iraq are in terrible danger.

Rhetorical attempts to obfuscate failed tactical decisions in Iraq with the global war on terror will do nothing to solve the problem that is before us today. Nor will it correct this body's failure to provide its constitutional oversight responsibility that has led to the billions of American taxpayer dollars that have either been misused or remain unaccounted for in our efforts to rebuild Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, global terrorism remains a grave national security threat to the United States. However, the war in Iraq and this resolution is a distraction from our struggle against terrorism. As the President continues his stay the course strategy in Iraq, the Taliban is regaining strength in Afghanistan. If we are to prevail in the war on terrorism we must refocus our efforts on terrorist hotbeds, such as Afghanistan.

The brave men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces are the best-equipped, best-trained and most professional fighting forces in the world. They have been performing their jobs courageously and honorably and their morale remains high. These men and women deserve our thanks and our respect. They deserve better than this sham resolution.

Mr. Speaker, give this House back to the people for real debate on our policy in Iraq.

IN MEMORY OF FIRST LIEUTENANT RYAN T. SANDERS, UNITED STATES ARMY

HON. PETE SESSIONS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Army First Lieutenant Ryan T. Sanders, an American hero who gave his life in defense of liberty and freedom. He made the ultimate sacrifice so that others might know freedom, and I am humbled by his bravery and selflessness.

First Lieutenant Ryan Sanders was killed on June 11, 2006 while conducting combat operations when a roadside bomb exploded near his Abrams tank in Baghdad, Iraq. He was 27 years old. First Lieutenant Sanders was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division at Ft. Hood, Texas.

In keeping with Eagle Scout tradition, he placed the safety and well being of others above his own. His family is dedicated to American ideals of freedom and democracy as he is the third of four sons to serve in the Persian Gulf region.

First Lieutenant Sanders is survived by his wife, Jennifer Sanders; his parents, Jim and Kay Sanders of Richardson; his brothers, Mike, Jeff, and Greg Sanders; and his grandparents, Truett and Joyce Sanders of San Angelo. I extend my deepest condolences to each of them.

First Lieutenant Sanders leaves behind a legacy marked by courage, integrity and character. May God bless and comfort all those he loved, and may they know the gratitude of the American people.

DAN DANIEL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, on June 12, 2006, the organizers of the Dan Daniel Charity Golf Tournament, held their 18th tournament at the Andrews Air Force Base Golf facility, named for our beloved and honored colleague from Virginia who died serving his 10th term in Congress. Dan Daniel's unqualified support for the fighting men and women of this nation is legendary.

Dan was the first Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee, House Armed Services Committee and also served as the Chairman of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Panel. He was a man who cared deeply about military readiness and quality of life issues, (exchanges, commissaries, child care centers, bowling alleys, libraries, and golf courses).

Dan was an avid golfer; and while this tournament is held in his honor . . . it is for the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. This year, the tournament, together with Averett University, of Danville, Virginia, and the Professional Golf Association of America (PGA) hosted numerous special heroes from the Walter Reed Army Hospital and the Bethesda Naval Center to a special day of