

Iraq—often with success. Marine Commandant GEN Mike Hagee steadfastly challenged plans to underfund, understaff and underequip his service as the Corps has struggled to sustain its fighting capability.

To be sure, the Bush Administration and senior military officials are not alone in their culpability. Members of Congress—from both parties—defaulted in fulfilling their constitutional responsibility for oversight. Many in the media saw the warning signs and heard cautionary tales before the invasion from wise observers like former Central Command chiefs Joe Hoar and Tony Zinni but gave insufficient weight to their views. These are the same news organizations that now downplay both the heroic and the constructive in Iraq.

So what is to be done? We need fresh ideas and fresh faces. That means, as a first step, replacing Rumsfeld and many others unwilling to fundamentally change their approach. The troops in the Middle East have performed their duty. Now we need people in Washington who can construct a unified strategy worthy of them. It is time to send a signal to our Nation, our forces and the world that we are uncompromising on our security but are prepared to rethink how we achieve it. It is time for senior military leaders to discard caution in expressing their views and ensure that the President hears them clearly. And that we won't be fooled again.

□ 2200

Mr. PAUL. I thank the gentleman, and I certainly appreciate your contribution. And I certainly appreciate your character, because you have been willing to admit something and change your position, which is sometimes very, very difficult for most people.

I have, of course, great concern, as I expressed earlier, about the war that is going on. But war in general is so dangerous to the cause of liberty, because it is in time of war that people are more willing to sacrifice their liberties. Today, we are told constantly that we have to do such-and-such here in this country because we are at war. Yet, we haven't declared a war. The war has not been declared.

We went to war without a declaration. And instead of being precise on just who the enemy is, we have a war against terrorism, yet terrorism is nothing more than a technique. There are all kinds of terror, terrorist acts, and all kinds of different people. So you really can't have a war against terrorism. So we should be much more precise.

But why I have, for as long as I can remember, been preaching the doctrine of the Founding Fathers on foreign policy is because I think it would be so much better for us. We would fight fewer wars, we would be a lot wealthier, there would be a lot less killing, and it would be so much better for us, and that is simply a policy of nonintervention. And as I stated in my prepared remarks, this is a good moral position, it is a good constitutional position, and it is a good practical position.

Wars that are fought indiscriminately and without declaration and without everybody being together and fighting for a quick victory, they lin-

ger and they just never have good resolve. And that is essentially what has happened since World War II. So I will continue to talk about nonintervention. I believe my allies, the Founding Fathers of this country, and the Constitution, should be enough reason for everybody to at least give consideration to nonintervention.

And I am convinced that our liberties would be better protected, our financial circumstances would be so much better off, and certainly we wouldn't have the burden and the heavy heart that Mr. JONES certainly bears about seeing so many young people needlessly losing their legs and dying in a battle that is so difficult to understand and has not come to resolve.

MORTGAGING THE FUTURE OF THE MILITARY

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

Mr. SKELTON. I thank the Speaker for recognizing me this evening.

I wish to speak tonight about the United States military. I have the privilege of serving as the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee here in the House of Representatives. I wish to speak about mortgaging the future of our military.

In particular, I want to talk about the Army, the United States Army. That wonderful institution that has contributed so much to American freedom, has meant so much to us historically, and yet I feel that I must discuss and tell my colleagues this evening about the future of our military and how it is being strained in so many respects.

I want to talk about two of the elements of military. In particular, I want to talk about the Army. This is true also of the Marine Corps, but I will discuss mostly the Army.

The continuous deployment in Iraq hurts our military personnel and their families by straining the recruiting and retention; it damages our readiness for our mission skills outside those required for Iraq. As we all know, we have lost some 2,529 servicemembers killed in Iraq. We have over 18,000 wounded, with near 8,500 of those unable to return to duty.

Regarding the active duty of the United States Army, over 14 percent of the Army active duty force is currently deployed in Iraq. The quality of recruits has fallen in the United States Army, as greater numbers of high school dropouts and other category IV recruits, the lowest level of recruit, have been increasing. Additionally, the number of soldiers who score below the 50th percentile in the Armed Forces Qualification Test has been increasing.

For the past several years, the Army has reduced the minimum time-in-grade requirements for promotion to captain from 24 months to 18 months.

It takes 38 months for a lieutenant to become a captain compared to 42 months just 2 years ago.

One hundred percent of the Army's available active duty combat brigades have served at least a 12-month tour in Iraq or Afghanistan. At least 50 percent of those combat brigades have completed their second tour in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Regarding the Selected Reserves, more than 20 percent of those currently deployed in Iraq are members of the Selected Reserves. That is the Guard and the Reserves. Over 39 percent of the Selected Reserves have been mobilized since September 11. Nearly 20 percent of those mobilized have been deployed two or more times. In fact, 13,800 members of the Selected Reserves have had three deployments, and 10,400 have been deployed more than three times.

Currently, 45 percent of the Selected Reserves mobilized are deployed. Ninety-seven percent of the National Guard's combat and special operation battalions have been mobilized since September 11. The average tour of duty for National Guard members is 342 days.

Regarding recruiting and retention, by 2007, the Army projects that it will be short 3,500 active duty officers, primarily captains and majors. The percentage of officers leaving the Army has been increasing since 2004. Approximately 3,500 airmen are currently performing Army missions, and the Navy is also being asked to assume greater responsibilities in the Iraq theatre.

While the majority of the service components are currently meeting their recruitment goals, last year five components failed to meet their enlistment accession goals. The Army began the fiscal year 2006 with a delayed entry program of 12 percent, which is a 5 percent reduction from fiscal year 2005, and it is significantly below the 46 percent that was at the beginning of fiscal year 2003.

The cost of recruiting has increased tremendously in fiscal year 2005. Active and Reserve components spent \$3 billion on recruiting programs. The cost of retention has increased as well in fiscal year 2005. Active and Reserve components spent \$1.5 billion on retention bonuses, this compared to \$885 million spent in fiscal year 2004.

Next, let us discuss the equipment issues. Equipment readiness is falling, and Iraq seems to be a black hole for all available equipment. Forty percent of the Army and Marine Corps ground equipment is deployed to Iraq. Equipment in Iraq is wearing out two to nine times the peacetime rate. Some equipment has added as much as 27 years' worth of wear and tear in the last 3 years.

A Humvee designed for 14 years of operation needs overhaul or replacement in just 3 years. Additional armor added to protect troops is causing accelerated aging and has increased the number of rollover accidents. The Army has lost

over 100 helicopters since 9/11. Many of those lost helicopters have not been replaced. It took 4 years to replace the first helicopter that was lost in 2001. The Army has lost over 100 tanks and armored vehicles and over 1,000 vehicles since the start of the war.

Readiness trends for active units are falling, and nondeployed units are severely degraded.

□ 2210

Nearly all of the nondeployed Army units are suffering degraded readiness, with unprecedented numbers of units reporting at the lowest levels of mission capability. Units preparing to deploy for Iraq are being issued equipment. In many cases this equipment arrives right before deployment. This limits the training opportunities for units returning to combat.

Regarding their pre-positioned equipment, let us speak about that. Much of it is no longer pre-positioned. Pre-positioned equipment stocks have been seriously depleted to support the war in Iraq.

Nearly 40 percent of the Marine Corps positioned to afloat ships have been downloaded. The Army plans to download one of the two afloat brigades to supply more equipment to Iraq. These afloat brigades are used to rapidly provide heavy combat equipment to contingency missions. Afloat brigades reduce deployment time from months to days. This plan is accepting significant strategic risk that will affect force protection capability.

Let us speak about the National Guard equipment. The National Guard only has about 34 percent of its equipment on hand, down from 75 percent of its requirement in 2001. The missing equipment that has been left in Iraq is transferred to units deploying to Iraq. According to the National Guard, reserve equipment for fiscal year 2007, the Army National Guard has been directed to transfer more than 75,000 pieces of equipment valued at \$1.7 billion to the Army to support Operation Iraqi Freedom.

There is no plan to replace these items. This lack of equipment at home hinders the Guard's ability to train and adversely affects their ability to be comparable with active component units. Examples of shortages, the North Carolina 30th Brigade Combat Team returned from Iraq in 2005. The unit had left 229 HUMVEES or 73 percent of its predeployment inventory of those vehicles in Iraq.

Regarding repairing all of this damage, it is costly. The Army has at least a \$36 billion bill to repair and replace equipment. In fiscal year 2006, the Army will spend \$13.5 billion this year to repair and replace battle damage and losses from Iraq.

This isn't a full accounting of all losses, because some items such as helicopters, cannot be replaced because they are no longer in production.

The Army estimates that \$17 billion will be required for 2007. If the war in

Iraq ended today, the Army would require 2 years of supplemental appropriations for somewhere between \$24 and \$36 billion. Unfortunately, it will take much more than 2 years to repair or replace that equipment. The Army will not be made whole again for many years.

General Hagee of the Marine Corps reported that it has taken 2 years to produce replacement light armored vehicles from placement of the order until delivery. Army modernization and transformation has slowed due to funding pressures of the war in Iraq. Depots are not operating at full capacity. They are capable of producing 57 million hours of direct labor but are currently estimated at providing about 19 million hours of labor.

According to the Army's Tank and Automotive Command, the Army cannot afford to do full overhauls on its ground equipment and has made a decision to perform reduced scope repairs.

By the way, the Marine Corps has incurred a bill of some \$12 billion to date to reset its equipment.

In 2006, 19 brigade combat teams will return from Iraq. Their equipment is some 600 combat vehicles, 30,000 wheeled vehicles and 615 aircraft, and they will require 24 million hours of direct labor or repair. This will be quite a challenge for the Army, considering that the Army has still not repaired all of the vehicles deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom, which returned home in 2004.

By the way, the Marine Corps has determined that equipment deployed to air has suffered such significant damage and wear and tear and that 80 percent of it will need to be replaced.

Regarding the budget pressures affecting everything in the Department of Defense, it goes to make up for budget shortfalls.

The Army reduced its base operation support budget. Some of the cuts, such as cuts to childcare facilities, directly affect military quality of life and make it more difficult for already stressed military families to get by.

The Navy only partially funded its deployed steaming days in the President's budget. The budget included a request for only 36 of the 51 required steaming days for Navy ships, a shortfall of \$120 billion.

The Navy ship program was underfunded. The shipping program was underfunded by the President's budget request by \$119 million this year, bringing the total deferred maintenance bill for Navy ships to \$240 million.

Army modernization is being slowed. The Air Force's fleet of aircraft is aging, and we are not replacing them fast enough. The average age for Air Force aircraft is over 23 years. Some aircraft are over 50 years old. Would one feel safe to be in a 50-year-old commercial airplane? Do we feel we want to have a 50-year-old plane defending our Nation?

Regarding readiness ratings, they continued to fall. Very few non-

deployed units here in the continental United States are rated fully mission capable. Readiness in Iraq remains high, but it is coming on the back of the reset of the Army and Marine Corps. Units in the continental United States are short of equipment having to get additional parts and are sending additional equipment into the fight.

Units are training for Iraq without all of their required equipment. They are getting well only upon arrival in Iraq.

Readiness within the force services is poor across the board, and it continues to trend down. Mostly, this is due to the equipment as well as personnel issues.

When asked if he was comfortable with the readiness of the Army outside of Iraq and Afghanistan, General Schoomaker, the Chief of Staff of the Army, replied no.

Why do I make these comments? Because, under the Constitution of the United States, it is up to us to raise and maintain the military, the wonderful military of the United States. I spoke mostly, of course, this evening about the Army, the United States Army, that magnificent institution whose history is that of protecting freedom; and so much glory is due to those that wore the uniform from the days of our Revolution down to today, and I am so proud of them.

But we in Congress need to take heed of the personnel challenges. We need to take heed of the equipment challenges. We need to do so, and I bring this to the attention of this body, because it is the right thing to do for our country and for the wonderful military and those who wear the uniform of our country.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Mr. GERLACH (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today on account of inspecting flood damage in his district.

Mr. MANZULLO (at the request of Mr. BOEHNER) for today until noon on account of family illness.

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:)

Mr. HOYER, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. PALLONE, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. DEFAZIO, for 5 minutes, today.

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

Mr. EMANUEL, for 5 minutes, today.

Mr. SCHIFF, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. WOOLSEY, for 5 minutes, today.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD, for 5 minutes, today.

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