

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RESPONSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT FROM IRAQ ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 12, 2007

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, once again the new majority in the U.S. House of Representatives is calling on President Bush to change direction in Iraq and take the steps necessary to bring America's servicemen and women home from an Iraqi civil war we should not be fighting. The Responsible Redeployment from Iraq Act, H.R. 2956, is legislation that directs the President to commence redeploying U.S. troops with April 1, 2008, as a target date for completion of the transition. I strongly support H.R. 2956 and would like to commend the efforts of Chairman SKELTON and his staff for the leadership to bring this bill before the House.

It is clear that the majority of Members of this House, the overwhelming majority of Americans, and most of the world recognize that the on-going war in Iraq has been a disaster for the U.S., for the people of Iraq, and for security and stability in the entire Middle East. It is time for an exit strategy that allows U.S. troops to come home while transferring responsibility to Iraqi political leaders and their security forces to ensure the future of their country.

After 52 months—more than 4 years—of American troops in Iraq there can be no doubt about the commitment and sacrifice these brave men and women have offered our Nation. While their comrades continue to fight in Iraq, some 2,600 Minnesota National Guardsmen and women are now returning home after 15 months of service. They are heroes who have done the job they have been asked to do by their commanders. Our Nation is proud of these Minnesota troops and we are also proud of their families who sacrificed as well.

Unfortunately, while U.S. troops fight for Iraq's future there is a tremendous failure on the part of Iraq's political leadership to make the sacrifices necessary to create a political environment that could lead to stability and security. Sectarian tensions are too often promoted by political leaders which directly or indirectly lead to violence and killings of innocent civilians, far too frequently in the most brutal fashion. If political leadership and institution building on the part of the Iraqis are the essential components that will create an environment in which easing of sectarian tensions and stability can take hold, then the Bush administration has failed completely.

In Iraq, car bombings, suicide bombers, roadside bombs, sectarian executions, kidnappings and assassinations are all daily events that I regret to say are now normal for those of us who read any American newspaper. From the safety of thousands of miles away this is a tragedy for the Iraqi people and for those coalition forces trying to achieve their

mission. For many of us it is also a tragedy because the war was manufactured by an American President who now appears to be completely out of touch with the dimension of the disaster he has created. Rather than rationally disengaging from the escalating violence inside Iraq, President Bush has escalated the U.S. presence with a "surge" strategy that in turn has cost more American lives.

Adding 30,000 U.S. troops since the beginning of 2007 has done nothing to change the fact that it is Iraqis who need to take control of their own country and confront the forces, including terrorists, militias, sectarian police, soldiers and politicians, that continue to eviscerate, day-by-day, their own nation. If President Bush added 100,000 more U.S. troops I am unconvinced that any change in the current situation would take place. Only a political solution can unify Iraqis in a manner that will allow them to focus their energy and resources on building a nation and ending the bloodshed.

The President's refusal to understand that Iraq is now damaging America—our military, our standing in the world, and the lost opportunities at home—is alarming. The fact is the Bush administration's actions in Iraq have resulted in far more harm, cost and pain to the U.S. than Saddam's regime ever could have inflicted on our Nation. Yet, the President's defenders in Congress and in the media continue to urge a "stay the course" strategy while invoking the name of Gen. David Petraeus as if he can singlehandedly erase four years of mistakes and ineptitude. General Petraeus is an excellent soldier and a talented leader, but he is not a miracle worker.

The time has come to for a rational, strategic plan to bring our troops home from Iraq and H.R. 2956 provides sound direction. The U.S. has interests in Iraq and the region which we must defend using our diplomatic, economic and military resources. We need to engage to a much greater extent with neighboring countries and the global powers to affect change inside Iraq. All this can be done while the 160,000 U.S. troops in Iraq are being withdrawn.

While I will vote for H.R. 2956 and I expect it to pass this House) I am also under no illusion that my Republican colleagues will vote against putting in place a strategy to bring our troops home. I have no doubt that President Bush would veto this legislation if it were to pass the Senate and be sent to the White House. Like the situation in Iraq, change cannot occur with regard to our policy in Iraq unless a political solution can be achieved in Congress with a veto proof majority of Members of the House and Senate. The American people must use their voice and put the pressure on House and Senate Republicans to support commonsense, responsible legislation, like H.R. 2956, which will put America's interests ahead of the President's hopelessly uncompromising commitment to a war without end in Iraq.

Finally, I want to commend Speaker Pelosi for her tireless leadership and commitment to

ending the war in Iraq while always working to advance America's interests. The Speaker knows our Nation's security is paramount and the policies of the current Administration have put America at risk. Her continued leadership will ultimately result in Americans coming home safer and sooner from Iraq.

IN WELCOMING THE PRESIDENT OF POLAND TO THE UNITED STATES

HON. RAHM EMANUEL

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. EMANUEL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to welcome President Lech Kaczynski of Poland to our nation's capital. After taking office in December of 2005, President Kaczynski has strengthened Poland's already close ties with the United States.

Under the leadership of President Kaczynski, Poland has been one of the United States closest allies in strengthening democracy in Europe. Poland is a partner in the war against terrorism and provides support and stability to American efforts throughout the world.

President Kaczynski is scheduled to meet with President Bush today, and both presidents plan to discuss the possible inclusion of Poland in the Visa Waiver Program. As I have said before, Poland is a first class friend of the United States, and should not be treated like a second-class citizen.

I look forward to working with President Kaczynski and President Bush in modernizing the Visa Waiver Program to provide our closest international partners the opportunity to travel to the United States while simultaneously strengthening our security.

President Kaczynski's leadership has been vital to continuing the dialogue between Poland and the United States on important issues ranging from the war on terror to economic issues, and I look forward to continuing to work with his government.

On behalf of the more than 110,000 residents of the Fifth Congressional District of Polish decent, I welcome President Kaczynski to Washington and thank him for his fine work and commitment to democracy.

HONORING GENERAL MARIANO GUADALUPE VALLEJO

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 17, 2007

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the 200th anniversary of the birth of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo. General Vallejo was instrumental in the creation of a free California and

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

the drafting of the State constitution, and was the first great legislator from northern California.

Mariano Vallejo was born on July 4, 1807 in Monterey, then the capital of Spanish California. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, Vallejo joined the newly formed Mexican Army in California, where he served for the remainder of Mexican rule. As a successful commander, Vallejo was given command of the Presidio in San Francisco, where he was charged with defending northern California and pushing back against Russian advances along the coast. He founded a presidio in Sonoma as a military outpost to extend Mexican influence into the northern Bay Area. He also began construction of a casa grande in the town square, part of which remains today.

In 1835, Vallejo was drawn into politics when his nephew Juan Alvarado, falsely claiming to act on orders from Vallejo, precipitated an uprising against the unpopular Mexican Governor. The uprising was successful, and Vallejo traveled to Monterey where he was appointed Comandante General of the Free State of Alta California. Subsequent recognition by the Federal Government in Mexico City confirmed this, and General Vallejo remained in charge of California's military.

As the military commander of northern California, General Vallejo witnessed firsthand the incompetence of Mexican Federal rule, and he became convinced of the need to remove California from Mexico. His interest in promoting the settlement and development of northern California made him reluctant to enforce the Mexican laws dealing with foreigners moving into the area, and he often issued passports on the spot to new groups of settlers crossing into California. In 1842 General Vallejo was removed from military command in California and replaced by Manuel Micheltorena, who presided over the decline of order in the State, ultimately leading to revolt against Mexican rule.

On June 14, 1846, the Bear Flag Revolt began outside General Vallejo's casa grande in Sonoma, and he was taken prisoner and removed to Sutter's Fort in the Central Valley. He remained there for more than a month, and upon agreeing not to participate in the war with Mexico, he was allowed to return home. In early 1849 during American military rule, spurred by increasing chaos from the Gold Rush and the sudden massive flow of people into the State, Vallejo joined other residents of the area to form a council for governing northern California. This quickly translated into election to represent the Sonoma area at the State constitutional convention in Monterey.

At the State convention, Vallejo pressed the other delegates on a number of key issues, including banning slavery in the State, which succeeded, and voting rights for Native Americans who owned property, which failed. He also gave generously from his personal wealth to offer support for the establishment of a legal commission. Finally, he was part of the delegation that brought the proposed constitution to the military governor, Bennett Riley, for final approval. After voters in California approved the new constitution and California was admitted to the United States as the 31st State, Vallejo was elected as a State senator.

During his time in the State Senate, Mariano Vallejo led a number of initiatives to continue

the work he had done at the State's constitutional convention. He sponsored an act which would have allowed better government for the Native American population, and he spoke strongly against a measure which would have excluded free Blacks from the State. He also led the effort to establish a tax to fund free schooling in California. Finally, he donated land for the State Capital to be established at the north end of the Bay Area. This area, now the city of Vallejo, was the site of the capitol from 1852–53, but was moved thereafter to Sacramento.

After his departure from public life, Vallejo oversaw his remaining business ventures even as his lands were eaten away by claims from new settlers moving into the State. Later in his life he finally had the opportunity to travel to the eastern United States, where he saw Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and Boston, satisfying a life-long desire to witness the birthplace of American democracy. His final contribution to California was a vast set of collected writings on Native Americans and Californios, which is now in the collections of the University of California.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize the remarkable life of General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, and acknowledge the contributions he made to the establishment of statehood for California.

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Food and Drug Administration—FDA Amendments Act. This bipartisan legislation is an important step toward ensuring that the FDA has the authority and the resources it needs to protect the health and safety of American families.

Recent highly publicized tragic events linked to prescription drugs, such as Vioxx, have made clear the importance of the mission of the FDA and the improvements necessary to ensure its effectiveness. This bill strengthens the FDA's oversight of drug safety by establishing a new program within the FDA to monitor the safety of drugs. Under this legislation, the FDA will be able to examine drug safety even after a drug has been approved and is on the market. H.R. 2900 also increases penalties for companies that violate safety standards.

To regain the public's trust, the FDA's advisory committees must be medically qualified, independent, and acting on behalf of the health and safety of the American people. This is why it is important that the FDA Amendments Act addresses concerns about the potential for conflict of interest because members of FDA advisory committees are frequently involved in the drug and device industry. This bill requires each member of an advisory committee to disclose financial interests to the Secretary of Health and Human Services prior to a meeting on a particular matter. It also requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to submit reports to Congress on the membership of FDA advisory committees.

In order to increase transparency and accountability, this legislation requires that all drugs, devices, and biologics be included in a clinical trials registry and in a results database. All registry data on the safety and effectiveness of drugs and devices will be posted on an Internet site accessible to the public.

Additionally, H.R. 2900 reauthorizes through 2012 both the Prescription Drug User Fee Act—PDUFA and the Medical Device User Fee and Modernization Act—MDUFMA. These programs are essential in expediting FDA's review of new drug and medical device application and help avoid backlogs, which negatively impact both patients and manufacturers. This bill also reauthorizes the Pediatric Research Equity Act to encourage drug manufacturers to develop products to meet the specific and unique needs of children.

I am disappointed that this bill was not able to address direct-to-consumer—DTC—advertising of prescription drugs. Studies have shown that spending on DTC advertising from pharmaceutical companies has tripled in recent years and plays a role in the unsustainably increasing cost of health care. DTC advertising has also changed the doctor-patient relationship, with an increased number of patients requesting a specific drug or treatment, even in cases where a less expensive or different medication would be appropriate. H.R. 2900 is a good step forward, but I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to address DTC advertising of medications.

The safety of the drugs and devices on which so many Americans rely must be a priority for Congress. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for H.R. 2900.

CONDEMNING THE DECISION BY
THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE
UNION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM
TO SUPPORT A BOYCOTT OF
ISRAELI ACADEMIA

SPEECH OF

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 11, 2007

Mrs. MALONEY of New York. Madam Speaker. I rise in support of H. Res. 467, condemning the decision by the University and College Union of the United Kingdom to support a boycott of Israeli academia. It appears that this boycott reflects the views of only a small minority of this esteemed union. This small minority is tarnishing the reputation of a union whose membership includes professors of some of the most historic and enlightened academic institutions in the world. This boycott unfairly targets Israeli academics; it is both biased and destructive and should be opposed.

Academic and cultural exchange is a critical bridge between societies and cultures that have no other means of interacting with each other. Free exchange of ideas has been shown to be a very positive force in bringing people together to overcome their differences. Universities should not be conduits for espousing ethnically, religiously, or racially biased political ideologies. Throughout history universities have been bastions of progressive thinking and cross cultural collaboration and they should remain unfettered by such base and thoughtless ideas as bigotry.