

of al Qaeda in Iraq, as reported by the National Intelligence Estimate.

Mr. Speaker, the GAO testified before the House Armed Services Committee, upon which I sit, last week that only three of the 18 benchmarks established by the Congress have been met. Four have been partially met, and 11 have not been met at all. Specifically, only two of the nine security-related benchmarks were met, two were partially met, and five not met at all.

Furthermore, in a hearing before the House Armed Services Committee on Thursday, September 6, the Jones Commission made clear that political reconciliation is a key component of resolving the issue of sectarian violence. Accordingly, political reconciliation requires the diplomatic and international support of the global community. Presently, the President and this administration's efforts to gain this pivotal support are less than adequate. The Bush administration, as it has done in the past, continues to try to buy the patience of this Congress and the American people by pulling for excuses.

Mr. Speaker, 5 years ago I expressed my disapproval of the war by voting against the United States military operations in Iraq.

Today, I still remain unwavering in my support of our troops and the urgent need to make a responsible and timely redeployment of our men and women in uniform as a means to end the continued bloodshed.

I urge my colleagues to support our troops, support saving taxpayer dollars, and support the victims of September 11 by ushering in measures that will ensure diplomatic multilateral and bilateral support for political reconciliation in Iraq. A more focused and more determined strategy that will refocus and better utilize our efforts to fight the global war on terror is necessary to ensure that the victims of September 11 have not died without adequate retribution.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

□ 1930

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM, AND JUSTICE WILL REIGN IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to come to the floor today as we commemorated one day early the 6 years since 9/11.

Most of us just came from the steps of the east side of the United States Capitol bringing back memories of how we went together, united, on that day, September 11, 2001, to show the world and to reinforce America's values that we would not be deterred, democracy would reign, freedom would reign, and justice would reign in this Nation.

But I come this evening to again express my deepest sympathy for those families that still mourn and those who still bear the emotional scars and, of course, those who remain injured from that fateful day. I remember being here in the United States Capitol in a meeting. Of course, our minds would never have imagined and could not conceive of what we were about to expect as we heard people running through the Capitol knocking on doors, not being able to explain just what was happening.

Of course, those who wished to continue the day's business did not understand that our lives would never be the same. We finally recognized that there was something out of the ordinary happening. As we, in essence, escaped from this building without much information or understanding, watching over our shoulder the billowing black smoke of the Pentagon, rumors abounded. There were thoughts, suggestions, rumors or facts that planes were heading for a number of places, including the United States Capitol in Washington, DC.

On that day, we saw the loss of lives of those in the Twin Towers and the airplanes in the skies. We are reminded of those souls who steered that plane away from the United States Capitol that landed in the fields of Pennsylvania. We hold all of these souls dear to our heart. Over the weekend, I was able to catch, as I was passing by our television, a documentary on engine 54 in New York. It is my understanding that all 15 of those that were on duty on that day lost their lives.

Today I stand to salute all of the first responders and to highlight the firefighters who went into those buildings and never came out, and all other rescuers who likewise went into the buildings and never came out.

As a member of the Homeland Security Committee, we vowed, after the creation of this committee, to never have this happen again. Unfortunately, there is much work to be done. We

challenge, and we are challenged, to be dutiful and diligent in making sure that cargo on airplanes does not get unscreened by TSA, that we are assured that airports in the front and the back are secure, and that we are looking keenly at America's transportation system of buses, trains, and highways. We owe that to the American people.

Then, Mr. Speaker, as we listened to General Petraeus and to Ambassador Crocker today, we owe them a real war on terror and that is to be able to join with the world's allies, our allies, and fight the war on terror, fight it and win it in Afghanistan, find Osama bin Laden and bring a political reconciliation to Iraq so that we can bring our soldiers home. Fueling the fires of Al Qaeda and allowing them to come to Iraq in 2005 does not pay tribute to those who died on 9/11.

As I hold in my hand the American flag, I stand here today to recommit myself and to ask my colleagues as they come to this floor to recommit themselves to those lives that were lost, those families that mourn, that we will be a Nation united under truth, fighting the war on terror, making that our number one priority, and that we will pay tribute to the United States military, those who have served in Iraq, Afghanistan and places around the world, and make a final and important decision that the political reconciliation for Iraq must be in the hands of a sovereign people and a sovereign nation of Iraq.

It is time now to bring our soldiers home. The war on terror continues. We will never be daunted by that. We stand against the terrorists. But we must do it rightfully and truthfully. We must join together, win the war on terror, bring our soldiers home so that war can be broadened and we can be victorious on behalf of the people of the United States and those who lost their lives in that war.

REPORT ON IRAQ BY GENERAL PETRAEUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GINGREY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, as the gentlewoman from Texas who just preceded me stated, we just completed a memorial dedication remembrance ceremony on the steps of the Capitol as Members on both sides of the aisle came together led by our distinguished Speaker, our distinguished majority leader, and our distinguished minority leader. We came together in a very bipartisan way to once again pay tribute to the lives that were lost, indeed, and to their families, and to our first responders and the lives that were lost on their part and, of course, the City of New York on that great tragic day, that

great tragedy that occurred 6 years ago today, Mr. Speaker.

Before we went to the steps, the majority leader made a statement to our colleagues on this floor, which I fully support and endorse. I paraphrase his comments, but basically what Mr. HOYER said to us, just a few minutes ago, was that the terrorists, the extremists, those who hate our way of life and hate everything about this country, our great country, brought us to our knees, but they didn't bring us down. And they will never bring us down.

I absolutely agree that it showed the resolve of the American people that they can't bring us down. They got our attention, absolutely. And, Mr. Speaker, today, of course, also is the day that General Petraeus, the commander of Multinational Force Iraq, the four-star general, the combatant commander on the ground in Iraq, along with our ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, gave their report to the American Congress, to the House of Representatives, they will do the same thing over the next couple of days to the Senate, and directed this report to the House Armed Services Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. Speaker, there were 111 Members of those two respective committees present for this hearing today, which went on almost 7 hours. It was an opportunity for Members on both sides of the aisle to come together to listen carefully to a report that we mandated in our emergency supplemental spending bill that was passed March of this year, some 6 months ago.

Mr. Speaker, the thing that bothered me about this report was that in this town, last week, in this Congress, indeed, we heard nothing but negative comments about the messenger and what he might bring in regard to this report to suggest that it would be less than honest. Mr. Speaker, the New York Times today ran an article that basically showed a picture of General Petraeus and said, underneath the caption of that picture, General Petraeus is General Betray Us, to suggest, Mr. Speaker, that this general, our combatant commander of Multinational Force Iraq, would lie to the American people for some political advantage.

At this time, Mr. Speaker, I want to yield to my friend from Mississippi. I think that he may have a copy with him of that particular ad. I will be happy now to yield to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for yielding. I thank him for the remarks that he has already made.

Actually, it is not usually my practice to come before this House and defend the New York Times. But it was actually an advertisement, a full-page advertisement taken out in the New York Times by the ultra-leftist group, moveon.org. I have a copy of it right here.

Mr. Speaker, it is by George Soros and moveon.org. It says: "General

Petraeus or general betray us? Cooking the books for the White House." I was astonished to see even moveon.org attack the messenger as they did today and attack the credibility and integrity and, if you please, the patriotism of this great servant who has served so many years in the military and who was confirmed unanimously in the United States Senate. It was and is an insult. It shows the level to which the opponents of this surge and those who would legislate defeat in Iraq would go.

I was glad to see Ranking Member DUNCAN HUNTER and Ranking Member ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN take this group to task during the hearing and to call on members of the committee at the hearing today to disassociate themselves, whether they agree with our policy in Iraq or not, to disassociate themselves from this type of smear tactic that we saw coming from moveon.org in the New York Times in the form of this full-page ad.

Frankly, Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed that more Members on both sides of the aisle didn't rise and denounce this scurrilous attack on the integrity of one of our great public servants.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from Mississippi before I yield to my colleagues, the gentleman from Minnesota and also the gentleman from Tennessee. But I thank the gentleman firstly from Mississippi for bringing that New York Times ad so that our colleagues on the floor can see just how despicable this is. Now, at the bottom, you can't see the fine print, but moveon.org disavows itself from any political affiliation.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to give the Members of this body an opportunity to repudiate that ad. I have introduced a resolution. I understand our leadership on the Republican side will have a resolution to just say to the Members, please, in a bipartisan way, this cannot stand, and we cannot tolerate this. I think we will get an overwhelming show of support for that resolution.

I yield to the gentleman from Minnesota.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman. I have a remark I would like to make in a few minutes. I know our friend and colleague, the gentleman from Tennessee, has some comments he would like to make. But I was struck, in view of the discussion we are having right here, that today in that hearing that the gentleman was just talking about, the Joint House Armed Services Committee and Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, that General Petraeus was forced, I believe is the right word, to do something that I find absolutely extraordinary.

□ 1945

I have got his report right here to Congress on the situation in Iraq.

In the second paragraph, after he thanks the chairmen and ranking members, he says, "At the outset, I

would like to note that this is my testimony. Although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this testimony myself. It has not been cleared by nor shared with anyone in the Pentagon, the White House or Congress."

To think, one of the finest officers in the American Armed Forces felt it necessary to put this in the opening two sentences of his testimony, I find shocking and distressing. I am sure we will have more to say about that later.

But it is not only in response to this scurrilous ad, unforgivable ad that moveon.org has written, but, frankly, as my colleagues here know, there have been comments made by some of our colleagues directly challenging and questioning the integrity of General Petraeus. And when I saw this today, I was just appalled that we have reached that point.

Mr. GINGREY. The gentleman is so, so right. Here we are talking about a four-star general, West Point graduate, 35 years of military service, third rotation in Iraq, to have to put up with that kind of despicable attack. And, like I say, we are going to give our colleagues on both sides of the aisle an opportunity to repudiate that, which I am sure they will.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to my good friend, the gentleman from Tennessee, Mr. WAMP.

Mr. WAMP. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for his continued leadership.

It is not just General Petraeus that moveon.org attacks. One of the distinguished, I think very reasonable members of the Democratic Caucus here in the house, BRIAN BAIRD of Washington State, also has been protested by moveon.org in his office since he returned from Iraq in August and basically told what he saw. He came back and just said, this is what I saw: There is progress, and we shouldn't leave precipitously because there will be major consequences.

He told the truth. He is an honorable guy. He serves here in the House. I respect him. He is a Democrat, and moveon sends hundreds of people to protest at his office. It is a political agenda, and it is unfortunate.

I grew up a Democrat. The first half of my life I was a Democrat; the second half I was a Republican. I don't think either party has an exclusive on integrity or ideas, but I think this is so far over the top.

There used to be things that we did in this country as Americans, not as Democrats and Republicans. This should not be about winning the next election or the last election. Wars should not divide us along Democrat and Republican lines, and everything should not be seen through that prism, and moveon.org is shameless to do this. It is shameless, this advertisement in The New York Times, and, as the gentleman from Georgia said, everyone in this body should condemn

what they are doing to try to win elections over our men and women in uniform in Iraq.

My nephew is serving there in Iraq right now. I hate it that he would turn around and see this in a full page ad in a major newspaper against the most equipped leader to lead our forces in Iraq that our country has to offer, period, is who this is.

For them to slander him in this way for political gain is un-American. What they have done is un-American. They have the right under the Constitution to say it, and we have the right as Americans to reject it, and everybody in this House should do that.

Three main things, while I have an opportunity to speak tonight.

The mission is just. We lose sight of that sometimes, that our men and women in uniform are doing and carrying out what is right for our country at this very volatile time in world history.

It is also easy to forget that over half the Democrats in the United States Senate and almost half the Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives voted to remove Saddam Hussein by force. And others will come and say, oh, George Bush sold us a bunch of bad information.

Listen, if there was any bad information, everyone had the same information, and many of us voted, from both sides of the aisle, to remove Saddam Hussein by force. It is just very convenient now to say, oh, that was them and not me.

It is hard to take responsibility for your actions. It is hard to stand before the American people and say we need to work through this together. We need to stand behind our troops until they prevail, until we have victory and not retreat in Iraq, instead of saying this is all about them. It used to be in this country about us. We did things like this together, and we didn't retreat so the world would see us walk away from our commitments. This mission is just, number one.

Number two, the military has been extraordinary. They have been great. You heard General Petraeus say that today. What the Marines have done in Anbar, the progress that has been made there, it wasn't even hardly covered by the GAO report. They didn't even talk about the extraordinary success, civilian casualties way down, 80 percent success in the Anbar Province.

The moderates are even siding up with us and saying "We don't like al Qaeda. They are cutting off our people's fingers. They are killing our children. We want to fight with the Americans against these insurgents."

That is not the way it was before we strengthened our forces and had this success in Anbar. The military is performing in an extraordinary way and the tribal governments are now siding with us. That is progress by any definition.

The military is succeeding in Iraq. You may not want to hear it, because,

as one of your distinguished leaders said, you are in trouble politically if we succeed as a Nation in Iraq. That is what he said. I hated that he said it. That is terrible. That is an indictment on politics in America. We all win if we beat these terrorists in Iraq. Everyone in this country wins. The military is succeeding.

Number three, the political progress in Iraq is not happening. That is true. We need to be honest about it. I wish personally we could get rid of the Maliki government because I think it is deplorable. But we promoted free elections and that is what we got, and we can't very well turn around now and say, oh, we didn't like who you elected. Get rid of him. They have got to do that. That is the tough work of freedom. They have got to do that. I hope they do. But that is up to them. Politically, we are not succeeding the way we need to succeed in Iraq, and all of us in this House have an obligation to come together and see that through to completion.

Let me just close with this: I have worked for 13 years in a bipartisan way. I have scars on my back to prove it. I have made people on my side of the aisle livid with some of the positions that I have taken working with the other side. But I will not—

Mr. WICKER. Amen.

Mr. WAMP. You didn't have to say "amen."

But I will not cooperate with anyone for our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines to walk away in defeat or to leave prematurely before we can hold our head up and say "America has succeeded with this just mission in Iraq."

I don't want to stay for 5 years or 10 years. I think it is a matter of months before we can see real, live redeployments. But the military leaders need to do that. It doesn't need to happen on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives. We can't micromanage this war, and we sure as heck shouldn't be sending signals that we are going to pull them out, because that is the worst thing we can do for the long-term interests of our country.

The Middle East is in chaos. The Wall Street Journal said it well last week. The worst religious and political pathology in the history of the world is in the Middle East, and now you add to that nuclear weapons, terrorism, IEDs and control of the world's oil supplies, there is a lot at stake.

This is not Vietnam. Nothing like it. Nothing like it. It is a whole lot worse, the stakes of losing in Iraq. I believe that deep in my soul, and I am going to continue to say that on the floor of this House. We need to stand together as a Nation and stand together behind our men and women in uniform until we can leave in victory and drive back this terrorist threat at this point we are fighting in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for the time.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Tennessee, because

he knows of what he speaks and he speaks it well.

You know, this situation with the ad that the gentleman from Mississippi so kindly brought to the floor so all of our colleagues who may not have seen it in the newspaper this morning would have an opportunity to know exactly of what we are speaking about tonight, the gentleman from Tennessee suggested that sometimes people want somebody else to do their dirty work.

Mr. Speaker, look at this first slide to my left. Here is the quote: "No one wants to call Petraeus a liar on national TV," noted one Democratic Senator, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. The expectation is that the outside groups will do this for us."

This was last week, an anonymous Democratic Senator being interviewed by Politico.com.

Well, lo and behold, it looks like one these outside groups indeed are doing the dirty work of calling General Petraeus "General Betray Us." How despicable.

As I said just a few minutes earlier, Mr. Speaker, we are talking about a gentleman, a patriot, a great leader who has served this country honorably and selflessly for over 35 years. He has risked his life in combat. He accepted lengthy deployments away from his family to defend our Nation and its citizens from its enemies.

For this, Mr. Speaker, he deserves the respect, the admiration and gratitude of every single American, and not disgraceful slander from despicable groups like moveon.org. Is that PHIL GINGREY coming up with an original statement? No. I am quoting Senator JOE LIEBERMAN. God bless Senator LIEBERMAN.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to our distinguished colleague, the gentlewoman from North Carolina, VIRGINIA FOXX.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, Mr. GINGREY. I appreciate your allowing me to join you and these other very articulate people who are here tonight speaking on this issue.

I was not here as a Member of Congress on 9/11/2001, but I am very pleased to be here tonight. As we were outside singing The Star Spangled Banner and our colleagues in the majority were talking about our being united, I was thinking about the fourth verse of The Star Spangled Banner, which very seldom gets sung, but I think is something that is so appropriate for the time that we are in right now.

This is the way it goes. I know it by heart, but I didn't want to take a chance tonight, so I am going to look at my notes just in case. It is really my favorite verse.

"O, thus be it ever when free-men shall stand,
Between their lov'd homes and the war's desolation;
Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the
heav'n-rescued land
Praise the Pow'r that hath made and
preserv'd us as a nation.
Then conquer we must, when our cause it is
just,

And this be our motto: "In God is our trust." And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

When Francis Scott Key wrote those words in 1814, they meant a lot. They mean just as much or more now, and I am, like my colleagues, absolutely appalled at the approach that has been taken to the situation that we are in now by many on the Democratic side.

It is appalling that they would question the integrity of the very men and women who are giving them the chance to stand up and lambaste them and slander them the way they are. They completely have forgotten what happened on 9/11. Many American people have forgotten. They don't understand the threat that this country is under and what we are doing to preserve our freedom.

There is such irony in the fact that these people would get up and say this again against the people who are risking their lives so they can stand up in the safety of this country and speak freely. It just absolutely blows my mind that they are able to do that. They are being given the ability to speak freely by people risking their lives and people losing their lives every day.

There is an arrogance of this Congress too, I think, the arrogance that demanded this report, the arrogance that says we are failing, when, in the face of all of the statistics, things are going so much better. There is an arrogance that says that if there is no strong national government, then things aren't going right.

You know, people have forgotten that this country was founded to have a strong local and State governmental structure, and the local and state governmental structures in Iraq are working well. No, it is not going as well as the national level, but compare what we have done with what they have done. We have accomplished very little under the leadership of this Democratic house in the last 8 months; very, very little. You compare that to what they have been able to achieve and think about us.

I spoke to a class today, three classes, actually, in my district, and I said to those students, the American people really don't realize in many ways the radical idea that this country was when we were formed. When people came to the United States, before it was the United States, they came here for freedom. They came seeking freedom. All they had ever known was freedom.

□ 2000

When Britain tried to clamp down on us, people said we are not going to put up with that. All the people in this country have ever known is freedom. All the people of Iraq have ever known is repression. We have asked them to do in a couple of years what took many years to develop in this country; and,

again, it was a totally radical idea never perpetuated anywhere before. And yet they are doing very well at the local and provincial level, just like we did.

And now this Congress comes in and says if you don't have a strong national government, you have nothing. You are a failure. That is just not true. And I am simply appalled, too, at the people who want us to lose. How can they not understand the impact of our losing the war against the radical Islamic jihadists? This is not a war in Iraq; this is a worldwide war. One piece is in Iraq, and in many ways we are blessed that we have a concentration there where we can deal with it, because we are stopping them all over. They have not attacked us again. We have successfully defended ourselves from another attack, but they simply do not want to acknowledge it. All they see are the negatives, nothing positive.

And I, again, am appalled at the attitude of the people who want the United States of America to fail. My attitude to them is if you can find a better place to live, go live there. If you can't, then stay here, help us defend this country. Help us support our troops willingly to fight for our freedom. Help us to bring liberty to other places in the world. Then we will see a safe world. If not, go someplace else and live.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentlewoman from North Carolina with such prescient words she brings to us.

I want to bring my colleagues' attention to the next poster I have got. I am going to give two quotes, one from General Petraeus from the hearing today and the other from Ambassador Crocker.

First from General Petraeus: "To summarize, the security situation in Iraq is improving, and Iraqi elements are slowly taking on more of the responsibility for protecting their citizens. Innumerable challenges lie ahead. However, coalition and Iraqi security forces have made progress towards achieving sustainable security. As a result, the United States will be in a position to reduce its forces in Iraq in the months ahead." That was from the testimony of General David Petraeus. Later in the hour we will talk a little more about specific recommendations for troop withdrawal that General Petraeus made.

I will read that quote from Ambassador Crocker in just a minute, but at this point I see my friend from Mississippi is still with us, and I would like to yield to him, the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER).

Mr. WICKER. I appreciate my friend yielding, and I have also been in need of a poster before and not been able to find it. If the gentleman would put that quote from General Petraeus back up, I will refer to it while he looks for the other quote from the ambassador.

To emphasize this point again, coalition and Iraqi security forces have made progress toward achieving sustainable security. Now, that is the tes-

timony of this well-respected general that we have entrusted with this very important mission.

And it disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, that often the message of the accomplishments doesn't get through to the American people. We hear only about benchmarks not quite being met or expectations not quite being realized. For example, people point to the fact that an oil law has not yet been enacted by the leadership in Iraq and submitted to the Iraqi Parliament.

As a matter of fact, as the testimony indicated today, oil revenues in Iraq are up and the revenues are in fact being distributed out to the local governments and the provinces. Now, this is in the absence of a final piece of legislation enacted by the parliament. But the fact remains that under this interim procedure that they have now, the oil revenues are there. Iraq is exporting oil for the first time in quite some time, and the oil revenues are being distributed out where they can benefit the people. That may not be a benchmark of legislation, but it is a real accomplishment; and it is the sort of thing that General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker were talking about.

Also, there has been much made of the fact that there has been no reconciliation statute enacted into law over there. But as was pointed out today in the testimony, former members of the Iraqi Army, former Baathists, if you please, are now being accepted into the government and being given pensions from the government and many of them are being accepted back into the security forces there in Iraq.

Now, a law hasn't been passed, but in my opinion that is de facto reconciliation and de facto amnesty for these people who were formerly in Saddam's Iraqi Army. By the thousands, these people are being integrated back into the mainstream of Iraqi security forces.

Also in the Anbar province, it is well known at least in this capital city that the sectarian leaders all across that province have turned on al Qaeda. They were in league with them a year ago. They have now turned on them, and they are helping the United States and coalition forces because they realize that their future does not lie with this destructive, violent al Qaeda force, but with the forces that would bring freedom and liberty and self-determination to more Iraqis.

Sectarian violence is down, as Senator LIEBERMAN and Senator McCAIN pointed out in their op-ed in the Wall Street Journal today, and I would commend that to our colleagues. There is an excellent bipartisan piece about that. Sectarian violence is down all over the country, down 70 percent in Baghdad alone. So there are real accomplishments there.

Certainly, as the general said, innumerable challenges lie ahead. The assessment is optimistic, but it is sober

and this is no rosy scenario; but there is much reason to be optimistic.

Let me just say this about the feeling of the American people: I know that they are frustrated about this. This war has gone on longer than expected, and they have been conflicted about it. But I believe after being home for much of August and talking to my constituents, I think the American people do want us to succeed in Iraq. They realize that failure there, that withdrawal there, that leaving too early would leave a huge void that probably al Qaeda would fill and probably our detractors in Iran would fill, and they know that would be a disaster. They want success, and I think these two gentlemen who testified before us give us a good opportunity for success.

A few moments ago we gathered on the east steps of the House of Representatives, and we commemorated the sixth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on 9/11. Two other speakers on the floor today were not Members of the House of Representatives at that time. I was, and I shall never forget the resolve and the determination of the Congress, both ends of this building, both sides of the aisle, on that day to defeat these terrorists.

The al Qaeda terrorist network that we are fighting in Iraq today is the very same network that brought down those two buildings in New York. They are the very same network that sent a plane crashing into the Pentagon. And they are the very same al Qaeda that had a plane headed toward Washington, DC, which undoubtedly was headed towards the Capitol Building.

We are still fighting al Qaeda, and I appreciate people like Ambassador Crocker and General Petraeus who are fighting that war as capably as they know how. Al Qaeda must be defeated, Mr. Speaker. And our best opportunity, our greatest chance to defeat al Qaeda today is to be successful in Iraq. That's what I would urge my colleagues to support, and I believe that is what the American people want us to do. I thank my friend for calling this Special Order.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Mississippi. The gentleman is right, I was having a little trouble finding that poster because I don't have that poster; but I do have a smaller copy of it. I guess you would call this a slide, Mr. Speaker.

But I did want to read this quote from the testimony of Ambassador Crocker before I call on my colleague, Colonel John Kline. Here is what Ambassador Crocker said: "A secure, stable democratic Iraq at peace with its neighbors is attainable. In my judgment, the cumulative trajectory of political, economic and diplomatic developments in Iraq is upwards, although the slope of that line is not steep. The process will not be quick. It will be uneven, punctuated by setbacks as well as achievements, and it will require substantial United States resolve and commitment."

I think the ambassador and General Petraeus served this country extremely well today in their testimony, and their facts were accurate.

Mr. Speaker, with that I want to yield to my colleague on the House Armed Services Committee, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. KLINE).

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to pick up on some of the comments that our friend and colleague, the gentleman from Mississippi, was addressing when he was talking about some of the information in the testimony that we heard today from both General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker.

I have the testimony from General Petraeus here in my hand. Mr. Speaker, I thought I would touch on a couple of the points that he made. He says that the progress our forces have achieved with the Iraqi counterparts has been substantial. He says, I see improvements in the security environment. The level of security incidents has decreased significantly since the start of the surge of offensive operations in mid-June. Civilian deaths have declined considerably. He says locals have increasingly supported our efforts. While he says al Qaeda certainly is not defeated, it is off balance and we are pursuing its leaders and operators aggressively.

This report is not all rosy. General Petraeus made the point several times during the over 6 hours of testimony that we had today that he doesn't want to look at this from a rosy standpoint or a pessimistic standpoint or an optimistic standpoint, but from a realistic standpoint; and I believe that this great leader, this great general, this man of great integrity and competence and capability did just that for us today.

One of the things that came up repeatedly during the hearing today was a reference to another report and another hearing that we on the Armed Services Committee heard about last week. General James Jones, a former commandant of the Marine Corps, the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, was the head of a commission, a very distinguished commission, I might add, one of the most experienced I have ever seen, that had military officers and senior noncommissioned officers and experienced law enforcement personnel go over to Iraq with the charge to evaluate the Iraqi security forces.

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Repeatedly today, and sometimes last week, we heard our colleagues saying, well, General Jones came with a very pessimistic report, and he had great concerns that things aren't going well. And one of our colleagues actually asked the question, General Petraeus, how do you square, how do you reconcile, if you will, these differences in reports.

And I remember thinking, Mr. Speaker, when I was in that Armed Services Committee hearing and listening to

General Jones and his exceptionally well-qualified colleagues, that the hearing that we were experiencing was not at all like the news reports, perhaps like the ads we saw earlier today, but was not at all like the news reports we had seen before the testimony in the Armed Services Committee.

And just as an example, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to quote just a few things that General Jones and some of his colleagues said during that hearing.

He said, our first conclusion is that the Iraqi security forces as a whole cannot yet defend the territorial integrity of Iraq. This is not necessarily an alarming conclusion, he said. They're able to do more in terms of combating the internal security threats to Iraq, and that's positive. He said, we've noted improvement in the internal security missions such as denying the safe haven to terrorists, and this progress is likely to continue in the months ahead. He says, the Iraqi security forces can bring greater security to the provinces in the next 12 to 18 months, assuming a continuing rate of progress. He said, the impact of the surge has had a tactical success for both Iraqi and coalition forces in the Baghdad region.

That doesn't sound like a pessimistic report or out of step with what General Petraeus said today. It's what we have known for some time, and I'm sure that my colleagues on their trips to Iraq have had the same experiences and reports that I have, and that is, that the Iraqi Army has been making steady progress but the police forces are in some disarray and need of major improvements.

In fact, General Jones and his commission recommended that the national police force, a relatively small group of 25,000, be disbanded and distributed to other forces and that the much larger Iraqi security police be strengthened. Again, not at all out of sync with what we heard today.

And in fact, because I had heard in previous trips to Iraq that the Iraqi Army was doing well and the Iraqi police was not doing well, I said to General Jones, well, this seems very consistent with the message that we have heard for some time. So I'm not surprised to hear you say that, and you probably weren't surprised to find that yourself.

And I thought this was amazing. He said, and I will check my notes here to make sure that I've got this right, he says, I was pleasantly surprised. I'd been going to Iraq off and on since 2003 in my NATO hat, and again, he was the commander of NATO, but I think I did not expect to see the will that I saw in the Iraqi Armed Forces to take the fight to the enemy. I did not expect to see the length and breadth of the institutions that are functioning that you need to support an emerging army, the training bases, the recruiting, the recruit training, NCO schools, counter-intelligence schools, training corpsmen. All of those things exist. We know that because we saw them.

This was a very highly experienced group of four-star and three-star generals, sergeants major, police chiefs that went, and this was their assessment when they came back. And again, this seems to me very consistent with General Petraeus' report today that said, well, things are still tough over there, but the surge is working and we're making progress. I know my colleague wants to talk about some of those recommendations in a bit, but I just want to go to one more.

Mr. GINGREY. The point you made, of course, about the Iraqi national police, General Jones, you're right. I was in that same hearing with Representative KLINE last week, Mr. Speaker, and General Jones did talk about this Iraqi national police force of about 25,000 that in the past was rife with corruption, and of course, a lot of changes in the leadership, as General Petraeus pointed out today, that has occurred.

But I think it's important, and I think Mr. KLINE would agree with me, for our colleagues to understand that the press in the last week, talking about the Jones report, suggested that the entire Iraqi security force was incompetent and corrupt when, indeed, 49,000 is only about 10 percent of the 550,000 Iraqi national army and combined police force. So many of them are doing a good job, as you pointed out in the hearing today.

Mr. WICKER. If the gentleman will just yield on that, I'm glad that both of my colleagues have pointed this out, Mr. Speaker.

In just the short time that we've been hearing quotes from this Jones report, which I very much appreciated, I don't know how many times the gentleman from Minnesota read the word "progress," progress in this respect, progress in other respects, challenges of course, but progress, progress, progress, the word "success," the words "pleasantly surprised."

So it would certainly be inaccurate to say that the Jones report was totally negative and that the Petraeus report was somehow far different. So I very much appreciate the gentleman pointing that out, and I simply wanted to underscore the very optimistic words that the general had in his testimony.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I thank the gentleman for that. Reclaiming my time, if it's mine to reclaim, I'm not sure sometimes in these Special Orders whose time it is. I think it's the gentleman from Georgia's, but I don't want to have my colleagues or Americans believe that General Jones or General Petraeus came with nothing but good news. That's not the case.

As we discussed earlier, the Jones commission recommended some major changes in how the police is trained and equipped and how it functions and how it's organized, that they were highly critical of the Ministry of the Interior and how they're functioning and, in many cases, failing to function. So there are clearly problems, but the

Jones report, the Jones commission did not come back and say that all is lost and Iraqi security forces are all failing.

In fact, that paragraph that I read quoting General Jones talking about how he was pleasantly surprised about the terrific progress of the Iraqi Army underscores that some good things are happening.

I thought it was interesting in that hearing, as my colleague from Georgia no doubt remembers, during the question-and-answer period, the former Deputy Secretary John Hamre, former Deputy Secretary of Defense, was asked some questions about what we should do in Iraq, should we leave or should we leave quickly or were things too bad. And he said in part, and again I'm quoting, but we have strategic interests that are larger than just Iraq. I mean our continued influence and presence in the region, the ability to get continued access to energy resources, providing a counterweight to Iran. We have large strategic interests. Every one of those interests would be seriously diminished if we had to crawl out of Iraq or run out of Iraq.

I think that is significant, Mr. Speaker. He made the point that when we leave Iraq, we walk out of Iraq on our terms, having defeated in large measure al Qaeda and left an Iraq with a promising future with the violence under control and political progress being made.

And so I just think that we have seen some unfortunate, really strident partisan statements made in the last week or so, and I guess it's unavoidable that people tend to go to sources that match their perspective. But I thought that the constant referring to the Jones Commission's report as somehow undermining what General Petraeus was saying or not consistent with it or indicating that all was lost in Iraq was simply not correct. And these quotes were part of many in what I thought was a very thorough, complete testimony and thorough hearing when we had the members of that commission in before the Armed Services Committee.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman would have time to stay, I would be glad to yield back to him as we go forward, but absolutely this Jones report last week, I couldn't believe what I was reading the next day after hearing the report and hearing General Jones, retired Four-Star General Jones, Marine, former Marine commandant, and Colonel Kline, a Marine, knows him well. He was one of 20 members of that commission.

Again, this commission was created by the Congress, by the new majority, as we passed that emergency supplemental spending bill back in February or March, 6 or 8 months ago, to tell us, you know, what's the situation with the Iraqi security force, both army and the police, and not just, as we pointed out earlier, the national police.

And almost to a person, the members of that panel who spoke, not all 20 did, but they gave encouraging news. They

pointed out the shortcomings, of course, of the national police and the Iraqi police force that was not perfect. They didn't give us some Pollyanna, glossed-over, varnished report. They told the truth. But as Colonel Kline points out, I thought it was an encouraging report. Of course, you would never have known it, Mr. Speaker, by the headlines the next day. So the gentleman may want to comment on that.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. If the gentleman would yield for just a minute, that's what struck me is that, very much like General Petraeus' testimony today, the media discussion and the political discussion and the partisan discussion that led up to the testimony simply didn't match the testimony that we heard in either of these hearings.

For example, I'm sure that many of our colleagues were surprised, and frankly I was, to hear General Petraeus say that it's tough but we're making progress, and we're making progress to the point where I'm going to recommend that we draw down our forces to the presurge level of brigade combat teams and we do it by next July. I was surprised that he put that date in there and that certainty in there when he made that statement.

He said we're going to start drawing down this year, brigade combat team is going to come back, Marine expeditionary unit is going to come back, and we're going to continue to draw down through the spring and into the summer. And that is consistent with the original intent of the surge. It was temporary with what the Iraq Study Group said about a temporary surge, and in fact, I think it's very consistent with what the Jones commission said as well.

Mr. GINGREY. In fact, I think General Petraeus said that that Marine expeditionary unit will be brought home next month.

Mr. KLINE of Minnesota. I believe that's right.

Mr. GINGREY. I thank the gentleman again.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to yield to one of my colleagues, another of my colleagues I should say, on the House Armed Services Committee, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Oversight Investigation, a new subcommittee, a good subcommittee chaired by my good friend, majority member Dr. VIC SNYDER, and I'm speaking of the gentleman from Missouri, Representative TODD AKIN, and at this time I'd yield to the gentleman from Missouri.

Mr. AKIN. Thank you very much, and thank you for taking some time to run through a series of events that actually in the last couple of days seem a little puzzling to me, I might have to say.

My recollection is that General David Petraeus, his credentials were reviewed over in the other body, and they took a vote as to whether or not he was the guy that we're going to put front and center to be in charge of the

entire campaign in Iraq, and he got a unanimous vote in the other legislative body. That says an awful lot of people had to vote for him to get a unanimous vote over there.

Also, as I recall, it was just not so long ago that the Democrat party, who's in charge of both the House and the Senate, made the request that in September General Petraeus would come before the legislature and would make a report as to what the findings were, would let us know how things were going. Many people were very skeptical about the reorganization, the restructuring of our war in Iraq, around the idea of the surge, but people trusted General David Petraeus. They trusted him because he has an excellent reputation and record as a soldier, but he also is a straight shooter. He doesn't sugarcoat things. He explains it the way it is.

And so it was with some sense of alarm and a little bit, I have to say, with a sense of frustration that we saw in the New York Times this calling General Petraeus where they say "General Betray Us."

What we're doing is taking somebody that before we thought they had good credibility, we're going to guess what they may say to us, we think we may not like what he has to say, so now we're going to try to destroy his reputation. I think that's a shame.

My son has served over in Fallujah. As you have mentioned, I also am on the Oversight Committee.

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One of the things that has been consistent with every witness, week after week over a period of months, every witness we could scrounge up, conservative, Republican, liberal, Democrat, you name it, the one thing those witnesses said was, first of all, they said if we pull out of Iraq rapidly, there is going to be a huge bloodbath there.

The second thing is that the whole region will be destabilized. Everybody agreed to that. Now, some people said, well, there is nothing we can do about it, so we ought to pull out now and cut our losses. Other ones said, no, there are some things we could do about it. But everybody agreed that a rapid drawdown of troops is not what we should be doing in America.

After listening hour after hour to all these experts, I came to the conclusion of this simple fact, and that is, it is the least-cost, most logical best alternative for us to just go ahead and win the war in Iraq.

We are more than halfway, and trying to turn around and back out, make excuses and try to lose is just going to be much more costly than moving forward and doing a good job.

That's what the general has outlined today in very credible testimony. I was very thankful that he is here. I am thankful that you took the time to help us to be able to talk about this very important subject about how we proceed and the sense of good news.

There is a little light at the end of the tunnel is what it seems like to me.

Mr. GINGREY. Light at the end of the tunnel, indeed. The gentleman is right on target.

As we conclude this Special Order hour, I want my colleagues to take a good look at this ad that ran today in the New York Times.

I know it's hard for the Members to actually see the text, or you can see the picture; but, basically, what it says, the caption is: "General Petraeus or General Betray Us?" With a big question mark. Then under that: "Cooking the books for the White House."

The first and last paragraph, I will quote, let me read this to you, this is what MoveOn.org, a political action committee says.

Mr. AKIN. Isn't MoveOn.org generally associated with the Democrat Party?

Mr. GINGREY. I hope not, I say to the gentleman from Missouri. I think if you look at their funding trail though you would find that they haven't contributed probably too much support in any way, shape, or form to Republican Members.

But hears what they say about General Petraeus: "General Petraeus is a military man constantly at war with the facts. In 2004, just before the election, he said there was 'tangible progress' in Iraq and that 'Iraqi leaders are stepping forward.'

"And last week Petraeus, the architect of the escalation of troops in Iraq, said 'We say we have achieved progress, and we are obviously going to do everything we can to build on that progress.'"

Then their final paragraph, I skipped the middle one, they say: "Most importantly, General Petraeus will not admit what everyone knows: Iraq is mired in an unwinnable religious civil war. We may hear of a plan to withdraw a few thousand American troops."

"But we won't hear what Americans are desperate to hear: a timetable for withdrawing all our troops, General Petraeus has actually said, will need to stay in Iraq for as long as 10 years."

Finally, they say, MoveOn.org, today, before Congress and before the American people, General Petraeus is likely to become General Betray Us.

In conclusion, as the majority leader said a few minutes ago, before we walked out on the steps, to commemorate and honor the American people on the sixth anniversary of that tragedy of 9/11, we did that in a bipartisan way. This is not a political argument that we bring to the floor tonight, and this business, if we are winning in Iraq, the Democrats lose. If we are losing in Iraq, the Democrats win. If we are winning in Iraq, the Republicans win. This is not about who wins politically. This is for the American people.

We are going to win. We are going to let victory have a chance. We are not just simply blindly staying the course.

In regard to this surge, this is exactly what the Iraq Study Group, Lee

Hamilton and former Secretary James Baker, recommended to the Congress; and this is what the President has done.

I commend him for it. I think we are making progress; but there is, indeed, as the gentleman from Missouri said, light at the end of the tunnel, a bright light. We need to give victory a chance.

IRAQ AND THE MIDDLE EAST

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. KING) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. KING of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, as I said a number of times in the past, it remains a tremendous honor to step here on the floor of the United States House of Representatives and address you about how this dialogue that we have across America is a great big national conversation, 300 million people, many of them talking about the very subject matter that my colleagues in the previous hour have discussed, and that being the issue of the global war on terror.

Particularly, because of the hearing today, the joint hearing between the Armed Services Committee, and it used to be the International Relations Committee, and now it's the Foreign Affairs Committee, many of our colleagues in the room of the 435 Members of Congress, over 100 in the room and many others were watching television in offices and in gatherings around this Hill. There was a national conversation going on and taking place here.

As we move forward with our discussion, one of the things that happens is, as talking members of the 300 million people of America carry on their conversation, a consensus forms. As a consensus forms, it works that the constituents across the country call up and write letters and send e-mails to and stop in and see their Members of Congress and their staff.

As that goes on, if the American people are informed, if they are informed honestly and objectively, if they can get there, they can get their eyes and their hands and their ears on the facts, the American people often come to an appropriate and proper conclusion.

But it happens to be a fact that nearly every week that we have been in session in this 110th Congress, now into September, having gaveled in here in January, nearly every week, there has been at least one bill on the floor, that was a bill, I believe, sought to undermine our efforts in this global war on terror.

Except for last week, there wasn't one. Yet, the commitment that was made on the part of the request to Congress, and on the part of our military and the President, was to deliver a report here to Congress by September 15, on or before September 15, that would be an objective update on the operations in Iraq, which I will stipulate again is the most centralized, the most contested battleground in this global war on terror.