

districts we represent. We can't be good fathers, good mothers, good parents when we are stuck here at 4 p.m., 4:10, nothing else to do, just wait for the next workday to begin.

So, Mr. Speaker, my simple point is, if we are going to work here in Washington, can't we please go back to working in the evening? I don't think that is too much to ask for.

□ 1615

IN RECOGNITION OF ALAN KRUTCHKOFF AND THE ADOPT-A-SOLDIER PLATOON

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

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon, Incorporated, their partners, Unilever and DHL, and in particular Mr. Alan Krutchkoff, the president and founder of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon and fellow resident of Fair Lawn, New Jersey.

Alan Krutchkoff started the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon with one simple act of charity in April of 2003, when he discovered that the son of one of his wife's colleagues was being sent to Iraq as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Alan took the initiative to pair this young man with his friend and cofounder of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon, Mr. Holmes Brady, who had been a reservist with Special Forces. Alan and Holmes went shopping for supplies and sent a care package to the young man stationed in Iraq.

News of this act of kindness spread, and it wasn't long before Alan discovered that many of his coworkers at Unilever had relatives or friends serving overseas. And, thus, the idea of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon was born.

The people of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon have made many outstanding donations to our brave troops serving overseas. Their contributions include numerous care packages consisting of snack foods, soft drinks, books, movies and clothes, a custom-built giant video screen for a Super Bowl party, personal care items for female soldiers and 25,000 blank DVDs and camcorders which enable tens of thousands of our troops to make personal videos to send to their families during the holidays.

In their efforts to support our troops, the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon has also gone well beyond simply sending care packages. In 2006, they worked with the chief information officer of the 10th Combat Support Hospital, which is the largest American military hospital in Iraq, to provide wireless Internet access for all of our soldiers. This provided the servicemen and women at the 10th CHS a closer connection to friends and family members and helped keep their morale high. The adoptee units of this exceptional volunteer group also includes the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion in Iraq, the 28th Combat Support

Hospital in Baghdad, Logistics Support Area Anaconda where 25,000 Americans troops live, the 324th Integrated Theater Signal Battalion, and the 449th and 209th Aviation Support Battalions.

In addition to these activities, the extraordinary people of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon are supporting our soldiers in their mission to rebuild Iraq. They have partnered with Charlie Company, 412 Civil Affairs Battalion, in the al Anbar province to implement what is called Operation Hearts and Minds. This operation is aimed at helping Iraqi residents build schools and work on local infrastructure.

Supporters of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon at Unilever have also raised money to send soccer balls to local Iraqi children and to provide additional security equipment to strengthen military checkpoints.

I also want to draw particular attention to this group for their compassion. On June 6 this year, the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon received a call from their contact at Charlie Company asking if they could help a sick Iraqi child get an operation in Jordan. Mariam, who was 1 year old, had a hole in her mouth and could not eat without getting sick. In one day, the people at the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon raised \$1,800 for Mariam's family to offset the costly medical and travel expenses she required.

Acts like this demonstrate the inherent kindness and generosity of Americans and, hopefully, generate much needed goodwill in Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, today it is my great honor to recognize the exceptional work of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon in supporting our troops; Unilever for their generous donations of products, money, and time; DHL for generously shipping care packages to Iraq; and, especially my friend and constituent, my fellow Fair Lawn resident, Alan Krutchkoff, for his tireless efforts and inspiring dedication to provide our men and women serving in the Middle East with a connection to their homes and families.

The organizations and individuals involved in this effort have greatly lifted the morale of tens of thousands of our troops who are putting their lives in harm's way tens of thousands of miles away from home, away from their families and friends.

This group of people, Mr. Speaker, is well deserved of every bit of recognition and praise we can impart upon them. I commend each and every person involved in this honorable effort, and hope that every Member of Congress will join me in recognizing the outstanding work of the Adopt-A-Soldier Platoon.

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

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina 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 gentleman from Texas (Mr. HENSARLING) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS AND THE OUT OF IRAQ CAUCUS

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Out of Iraq Caucus sponsored a very important meeting this morning to review the dire situation in Iraq and to explore ways to end the occupation. At this event, we heard from Dr. William Polk, one of America's leading experts on the Middle East.

Dr. Polk taught Middle Eastern history, politics, and Arabic at Harvard before joining the U.S. State Department's Policy Planning Council responsible for the Middle East and responsible for North Africa. Later, he became professor of history and founding director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Polk is the author of many books, including the recently published book entitled, "Violent Politics, a History of Insurgency, Terrorism, and Guerrilla Warfare from the American Revolution to Iraq." To write the book, Dr. Polk studied insurgent movements throughout world history. He found that they were motivated by many different causes, including race, religion, culture, economics, and language, but he found that they all had one thing in common, an opposition to foreign occupation.

Dr. Polk's research has clear implications for our policy in Iraq. It tells us that the American occupation of Iraq can never solve the country's problems. Only the Iraqis can solve Iraqi problems. And it tells us that the only policy that now makes sense is to withdraw our troops in an orderly but rapid way, and couple that action with a carefully constructed program that will help the Iraqis to pick up the pieces and to rebuild their country with the help of the regional international community.

The lesson of history is clear, Mr. Speaker; yet, our leaders in the White House continue to follow a disastrous course of foreign occupation. Their blindness has put our Nation on a very dangerous course. The administration has called for an enduring relationship with Iraq, meaning many years, perhaps even decades, of American military involvement.

If the administration has its way, babies now in diapers will grow up and march off to Baghdad while the neocons who crafted our Iraq policy play golf in their retirement communities.

The administration's policy of endless occupation will cost us trillions of dollars and countless casualties. It will lead to the deaths of countless Iraqi civilians and surely force millions more to become refugees. Meanwhile, al Qaeda will continue to hatch its plots against the United States in their safe havens far from Iraq.

It is clear that Iraq will never stabilize and find peace while we are present. Our occupation of Iraq prevents Iraqis from finding solutions to their own problems, and it prevents the regional and international diplomacy that is absolutely needed to help them reconcile and to rebuild.

The timely withdrawal of American troops is the essential first step in solving the Iraqi problem. So long as our troops and military contractors are there, the situation can only and will only get worse.

In the days ahead, I and others will urge Congress to move to end the occupation. Congress has the power of the purse. We must pass a bill requiring that all spending related to Iraq be used for only one purpose, and that is to fully fund the safe, orderly, and responsible withdrawal of all American troops and military contractors.

If we fail to do this, we will have failed the American people, who sent us to Congress last November with a clear message: End the occupation of Iraq. And we will have failed our country morally, we will have failed our country politically, and certainly we will have failed it economically.

It is time, Mr. Speaker, to do what we know is right and what is best for our country: bring our troops home.

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

(Mr. ETHERIDGE 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 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 Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

MAJORITY MAKERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. SUTTON) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Ms. SUTTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin this hour by talking about a subject that has become one of the most significant issues of our time. I am going to be joined by members of the freshman class or the Majority Makers throughout this hour to talk about Iraq.

We have heard in recent days about what the President's idea of our way forward is. He has called for more money and more patience and a renewed commitment to U.S. troops in Iraq for the foreseeable future, another stay-the-course strategy that puts us on a path toward a \$1 trillion, at least 10-year presence war in Iraq. On top of that, we have no convincing evidence that the political reconciliation necessary will be achieved even after so much sacrifice on the part of our brave troops will be realized.

I believe that the President's plan for Iraq amounts to an open-ended and dangerous commitment of American troops in Iraq and an open wallet from the American people to pay for it.

The question should not be whether we keep our troops in Iraq for 10 years. The question should be: How do we responsibly redeploy our troops? And how do we develop that plan that will do so while we continue to protect our homeland and fight against terrorists?

On August 19, we saw in the New York Times an editorial that was written by seven brave U.S. soldiers. I bring this to the attention, Mr. Speaker, of you and all those who may be tuned in because I think it is important that we listen to their vantage point. And while I won't be reading the entire article, I will read excerpts from it. Again, it is August 19, the New York Times, and I would suggest that everybody who can take a look at the complete editorial. It is entitled, "The War As We Saw It." And it begins:

"Viewed from Iraq at the tail end of a 15-month deployment, the political debate in Washington is indeed surreal. Counterinsurgency is, by definition, a competition between insurgents and counterinsurgents for the control and support of a population.

□ 1630

To believe that Americans, with an occupying force that long ago outlived its reluctant welcome, can win over a recalcitrant local population and win this counterinsurgency is farfetched. As responsible infantrymen and non-commissioned officers with the 82nd Airborne Division soon heading back home, we are skeptical of recent press coverage portraying the conflict as increasingly manageable and feel it has neglected the mounting civil, political and social unrest we see every day."

And then they say, in parentheses, "Obviously these are our personal views and should not be seen as official within our chain of command."

They continue:

"The claim that we are increasingly in control of the battlefields in Iraq is an assessment arrived at through a

flawed, American-centered framework. Yes, we are militarily superior, but our successes are offset by some failures elsewhere. What soldiers call the 'battle space' remains the same, with changes only at the margins. It is crowded with actors who do not fit neatly into boxes: Sunni extremists, al Qaeda terrorists, Shiite militiamen, criminals and armed tribes. This situation is made more complex by the questionable loyalties and Janus-faced role of the Iraqi police and Iraqi army, which have been trained and armed at United States taxpayers' expense."

And then they continue:

"Reports that a majority of Iraqi army commanders are now reliable partners can be considered only misleading rhetoric. The truth is that battalion commanders, even if well meaning, have little or no influence over the thousands of obstinate men under them in an incoherent chain of command who are really loyal only to their militias."

They continue in this article, and they state, "Political reconciliation in Iraq will occur, but not at our insistence or in ways that meet our benchmarks. It will happen on Iraqi terms when the reality on the battlefield is congruent with that in the political sphere. There will be no magnanimous solutions that please every party the way we expect, and there will be winners and losers. The choice that we have left is to decide which side we will take. Trying to please every party to this conflict, as we do now, will only ensure we are hated by all in the long run."

These brave soldiers conclude this op-ed with the following:

"It would be prudent for us to increasingly let Iraqis take center stage in all matters, to come up with a nuanced policy in which we assist them from the margins but let them resolve their differences as they see fit. This suggestion is not meant to be defeatist, but rather to highlight our pursuit of incompatible policies to absurd ends without recognizing the incongruities."

They say, "We need not talk about our morale. As committed soldiers, we will see this mission through."

I share that because I think it's worth having out there for our consideration and our contemplation to add to the wealth of information that is being presented to the American people.

I'm sad to report that since this op-ed began, they started writing this, during the course of writing it, one of these brave soldiers was shot in the head, and he is recovering. But on September 13, the headline in the same New York Times sadly stated, "Skeptical But Loyal Soldiers Die in a Truck Crash in Iraq." And two of these soldiers who had the courage not only to go and fight for our Nation but to do everything they were asked to do were killed in Iraq.

We are here today to talk about this pressing, pressing issue. The light that