

extraction method that had preceded it. All developed within and because of the United States.

Tyler Cowen goes on to point out that five of the six most important medical innovations of the past 25 years have been developed within and because of the American system.

Mr. Speaker, comparisons with other countries may, from time to time, be useful. It is important to remember that the American system is always re-inventing itself and seeking improvement. But it is precisely because of the tension inherent in a hybrid system that creates this impetus for change. It drives the change.

A system that is fully funded by a payroll tax or some other policy has no reason to seek improvement, and, as a consequence, faces stagnation. Indeed, in such a system, if there becomes a need to control costs, that frequently is going to come at the expense of who? The provider. Precisely the person you need to stay involved in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I have got one final slide, and I ask your indulgence to let me put this up here.

This just shows the Medicare comparative payment updates for physicians, Medicare HMOs, hospitals and nursing homes. The years are delineated there in separate colors.

The year 2007, when the slide was developed, was in fact an estimate for physicians. The reality is this number actually came back to zero because of some changes we made right at the end of last year.

□ 2115

Under physicians, you don't see a number for 2006 again because that number in fact was zero for 2006. You stop and think about that, this reduction was planned but never happened, but physicians were held to a zero percent update for the past 2 years.

Mr. Speaker, what do you suppose the cost of delivering that care in a doctor's office, what do you suppose has happened to that over the last 2 years? Well, their electricity prices probably went down because they went down all over the country. Cost for gasoline to go to the office every morning probably went down because the cost of gasoline went down everywhere across the country. I don't think so.

The Medicare system is designated to reimburse at about 65 percent of cost under ideal conditions, but the reality is there has been significant erosion of that. This is important because hospitals, nursing homes, and to some degree the Medicare HMOs, their prices are adjusted every year based on essentially what is called the Medicare economic index. That is a cost-of-living formula. Only this group, the physicians, is under a separate formula that is somehow tied to changes in the gross domestic product.

The sustainable growth rate formula penalizes physicians and has the perverse incentive of driving doctors out of the practice of medicine. As was de-

tailed to us by Alan Greenspan many months ago, there is only so long that can go on before ultimately you reach a place where it is going to be very, very difficult for the people who need the care to get the care.

Mr. Speaker, the United States is not Europe. American patients are accustomed to wide choices when it comes to hospitals, physicians and pharmaceuticals. It is precisely because our experience is unique and different from other countries, and this difference should be acknowledged and embraced, particularly when reform is contemplated in either the public or private health insurance programs in this country.

Mr. Speaker, one final point illustrated in a recent news story covered by a Canadian television broadcaster. It was about a Canadian member of Parliament who sought treatment for cancer in the United States. The story itself is not particularly unique, but the online comments that followed the story, I thought, were instructive. To be sure, a number of respondents felt it was unfair to draw any conclusion because, after all, this was an individual who was ill and seeking treatment and therefore deserving of our compassion, and I wouldn't argue that.

But one writer summed it up: "She joins a lengthy list of Canadians who go to the United States to get treated. Unfortunately, the mythology that the state-run medicine is superior to that of the private sector takes precedent over the health of individual Canadians."

The comments of another individual: "The story here isn't about who gets treatment in the United States. It is about a liberal politician that is part of a political party that espouses the Canadian public system and vowed to ensure that no private health care was ever going to usurp the current system. She is a member of Parliament for the party that has relentlessly attacked the conservatives for their 'hidden agenda' to privatize health care. The irony and hypocrisy is that position supports the notion that the rich get health care and the rest of us wait in line, all because of liberal fear-mongering that does not allow for any real debate on the state of health care within the country of Canada."

One final note from the online postings: "It has been sort of alluded to, but I hope everyone reading this story realizes we do have a two-tiered health care system. We have public care in Canada and for those with lots of cash, we have private care in the United States which is quicker and better."

Mr. Speaker, this is a discussion that will likely consume the better part of the next two years of public dialogue, certainly through the next Presidential election. The United States is at a crossroads. It is incumbent upon every one of us who believes that the involvement of both the public and the private sector is best for the delivery of health care in the United States of America.

And it is incumbent upon us to stay educated and involved and committed.

Mr. Speaker, we have all got to be at the top of our game every single day. This is one of those rare instances where it is necessary to be prepared to win the debate, even though those of us on my side may lose when it is taken to a vote here in the House of Representatives. But if we adhere to principles, we may ultimately post a win for the health of the American people, and not just the American people today, but for generations to come.

FOCUSING ON MOVING FORWARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MURPHY of Connecticut). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ISRAEL) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, tonight we do something different, something out of the ordinary. The American people are accustomed to tuning into C-SPAN and watching Democrats yelling at Republicans and Republicans yelling at Democrats. There is a Democratic Special Order and there is a Republican Special Order. C-SPAN has become a channel that requires a parental advisory before kids are able to watch. It has become unsafe because of all the screaming and yelling.

Tonight we do something different. Tonight we have a bipartisan Special Order. Tonight Democrats and Republicans will spend some time not focusing on our disagreements, not fighting with one another, not talking about the left and the right, although this is a place where there should be discussion about left and right, but focusing on moving forward, focusing on specific solutions and ideas with respect to Iraq that will move us forward.

The plain fact is that Democrats and Republicans are going to disagree on some fundamental issues. Maybe we are going to disagree on 60 or 70 percent of the issues, but we do agree on the 30 to 40 percent that is left. The problem is that we have allowed ourselves to be paralyzed on our agreements because we are so busy disagreeing with one another.

Well, 2 years ago we found the Center Aisle Caucus, a bipartisan group of 50 Democrats and Republicans who meet routinely not to talk about our disagreements, we know where we are going to disagree, but to see if we can carve out areas of agreement. To talk not about the left or the right, but to talk about the way forward.

We have convened a series of meetings specifically pertaining to Iraq. Tonight I am joined by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST), a Marine veteran who has been involved in those meetings and talked about bipartisanship and finding common ground and important solutions.

I am joined by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) who has become very active, a leader in the Center

Aisle Caucus, who also understands the importance of engaging one another and talking about moving forward rather than left and right.

We will be joined by other colleagues. The gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) who has been proposing with the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. SHAYS) that we integrate the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group into policy as we move forward.

I will be talking about two bipartisan solutions that I have been submitting. One, directing that the President submit a status of forces agreement to the Government of Iraq as a signal that we are not in Iraq to stay, to occupy, but that Iraq is a sovereign government responsible for its security. I believe that status of forces agreement, which we have in almost every country where we have a military presence, would be a very important signal to the Iraqi people and to our own forces.

Secondly, I will be talking about bipartisan legislation that I have introduced with the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) to expedite the process of bringing a variety of Iraqi refugees to the United States, those refugees who have served coalition forces as interpreters, as translators, who have risked their lives and now have to go through a bureaucratic nightmare to leave Iraq and come here. We will talk about that as well.

The final point I want to make before I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON) is this: yesterday I visited the Walter Reed Army Hospital. I visited with about seven soldiers who have sustained some very serious wounds in Iraq. I visited with one of my constituents who had his foot amputated. I visited with another Long Islander who found it very difficult to talk, very difficult to breathe. I visited with a soldier who was being discharged yesterday afternoon and will now begin outpatient treatment.

Ultimately, I believe and the Members who will join me this evening believe that our obligation is to them. It is not to the left or to the right. It is to them. They do not want the United States Congress to be engaged in partisan paralysis and bickering. That will not end the war. They want us to try and find common ground. I am under no illusions that whatever we discuss tonight, and the gentleman from Maryland and the gentleman from Texas and the other Members and myself, will end the war tomorrow. I wish we could end the war tomorrow.

The fact of the matter is that for as long as we are here together on the floor of the House, we have an obligation to try and work with one another on areas where we can agree. We can fight honorably, we can disagree respectfully on all matters of policy; but we have an obligation to move forward on areas where there is agreement. That is what the Center Aisle Caucus was formed to do.

One of our members from Texas served for many years in this distin-

guished Chamber and has returned to the Congress after a 2-year hiatus. He is somebody who personifies bipartisanship, who has been a leader in this body, whose constituents also expect him to be working hard to move forward rather than left or right, and I yield to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON).

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join Mr. ISRAEL and all of my colleagues tonight for something that is special. I want to first start out by telling our colleagues and the Speaker and others that even though there is a tradition that typically a Democrat will speak from one side of the well, and the Republicans the other, tonight is not about where we will sit or stand in this room. It is more about where we will sit or stand in relation to the needs of the people of the United States of America.

The Center Aisle Caucus is an organization of Members of Congress who are indeed going to look for ways to move issues forward that can make a difference for our families, our communities, and our States and Nation.

My involvement with this began actually on a trip, I guess, with Mr. GILCHREST some years back; and then when I returned to Congress after what I found to be some very difficult times where camaraderie broke down and it was very difficult for us to feel comfortable working with each other and discussing difficult issues, where often times it did break down into the partisan bickering and the screaming and shouting and little getting resolved, to the point where we gathered some of our colleagues to sit down and have coffee and ask: What can we do and do differently? What can we do to begin to get our friends to come and sit down with each other and talk about these issues respectfully, talk about them in the depth that I believe our constituents all expect us to be talking about, and find the acceptable solutions to the very difficult, difficult issues that face us in this Nation, and they are.

You said it, Mr. ISRAEL. Politics are suffocating the debate on Iraq in nearly every issue that we have faced in this Congress. If we can't come together and work honestly to find compromise on a critical issue like Iraq, what can we expect for other issues that are facing us?

We can't allow for progress to be stymied by partisan politics and vitriol. We must not let any political organization or campaign detract for the purpose we are all here for, which is to work on behalf of our constituents for the good of our country. What is needed now is thoughtful debate that considers Republican and Democratic ideas. We are getting there. That is what tonight is going to be the beginning of, I believe, and I look forward to a wonderful relationship with all of the friends that we are going to make in carrying all of this forward.

We owe it to our troops abroad, to our children in need of health care, to

our students, the hardworking taxpayers and the people that we represent to work together to provide a new direction for America. I believe that the Center Aisle Caucus is an organization within our Congress that is going to be able to help pull that together.

It is wrong for any party to think that they are solely right or wrong, and I am proud to be able to join those of our colleagues who have been willing to step forward, come to the middle and begin this debate.

I will yield back, but I would like very much to speak again in another few minutes as we go through this process this evening.

□ 2130

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman and I can assure him that he will have ample time this evening to elaborate on his views.

We have been joined by the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT) who I know is going to speak on some of his priorities and his efforts to bridge the gap between both parties.

I would like to yield to one of the most distinguished Members of this House, as I said before, a veteran, someone who I've come to know only recently. I've served in this House for nearly 8 years, and the gentleman from Maryland and I got to know each other only recently with respect to trying to reduce the polarization of this debate. We've had dinner. We met in my office some 2 weeks ago, and I want to commend him for his leadership and his bipartisanship and his desire also to find a way forward rather than right or left, and with that, I yield to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. GILCHREST).

Mr. GILCHREST. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ISRAEL for yielding, and this evening we are here as Members of Congress. Mr. ISRAEL from New York, Mr. LAMPSON from Texas, Mr. DENT from Pennsylvania, myself from Maryland and other Members will be here shortly from the various corners of this country, and we're here because we know that tonight a young American soldier may be on patrol somewhere in Iraq and there may be a landmine that he will run over. There will be Iraqi children that may get caught in the terrible crossfire. There may be Iraqi students on their way to a school or university that may be caught in a horrific explosion from a suicide bomber. Those kinds of things are unfolding in Afghanistan and, to some extent, those kinds of things are unfolding throughout the very difficult places in the world.

This institution, the House of Representatives, has a history of integrity. This Nation is based on the philosophy of integrity, and American citizens, the broad breadth of humans across the globe have, for centuries, had an assumption that this institution was competent, informed and rested on that philosophy of integrity that buttressed the concept of freedom and justice and dignity.

This cannot happen with a partisan divide. This cannot happen with people talking about the Democrats or the Republicans. We are not Democrats. We're not Republicans. We are Members of Congress representing constituencies that assume or, at least up until recently, they assumed that we were here for that philosophy of integrity. We were here to work hard, to work together, to integrate that integrity amongst the vast areas of this country, not just to be a Republican and find some mythical icon Republican that you are supposed to obey or some mythical icon Democrat that you were supposed to obey.

But Americans need more than that. Americans deserve more than that. That young soldier in that armored vehicle riding down the road in Iraq right now deserves more than that, and each of us, not only should, we must have a sense of urgency to fulfill our obligation and responsibility.

Mr. ISRAEL and Mr. LAMPSON and Mr. DENT will talk about that we have come together here fairly recently in the Halls of Congress to represent the sense that this institution is going to have an impact in a very positive way on this world that's laying out before us, and as we progress this evening as each of us discusses these issues, we will talk specifically about Iraq. But I want to make sure, Mr. Speaker, that as we speak about Iraq and this war, this is not our grandfather's war of World War I. This is not our grandfather's war of World War II, where you had a million Russian soldiers moving toward Berlin, you had a million American and Canadian and British soldiers moving toward Berlin, where the public could follow it on little wiggly lines in the newspaper every day to see how they were advancing. This is a war of insurgents where there are no cities to firebomb. There are no million troops to deal with this particular issue.

This is a war of insurgency. And how have these wars gone on in the past? They are wars that are complex and need the initiative, the ingenuity, the utmost intellect and courage of this institution to bring it to a successful conclusion.

I would agree with many Members who have talked about this, that we can't have 535 Secretaries of Defense. That's true. We should not have 535 Secretaries of State, and that's true. But this is not our grandfather's war. This is a war where Members of Congress need to know their counterparts in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Israel, in Jordan and Syria and Saudi Arabia, in Iran. This is a war where the integration of integrity of people from across the world need to understand each other in an ongoing deep and abiding dialogue.

This is so important for Members of Congress to be involved in this kind of conflict because it's not a million-man army against a million-man army. This is a war that involves culture, ancient cultures. This is a war that involves

politics. It's a war that involves economics. It's a war that involves geography. It's essentially a war where there's very little understanding. There's almost complete misunderstanding.

So an institution like the House of Representatives, working together can resolve this conflict. This conflict cannot be resolved, there is no reconciliation, without a dialogue of integrity across these great divides.

I want to thank Mr. ISRAEL and the other gentlemen that are here tonight to bring this dialogue, raise this discussion, this debate about this war to a new and higher and much-needed level.

Mr. ISRAEL. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Maryland and I want to underscore the point that he's making.

The center aisle is right here, right here in front of me. Those on my side of the center aisle can scream at those on the other side and those on the other side can scream at my side. That's not going to end the war. Again, this is a place, this is a House where we encourage debate and even dissent and disagreement, but the screaming and the vitriol and the partisan attacks will not bring this war to an end.

Those of us who are here this evening would prefer to spend our time engaging with one another, disagreeing respectfully on some issues but trying to find that common ground, trying to build that consensus that will bring the war to an end.

One of our colleagues who's here, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT), has been working very, very hard on a proposal to integrate the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group into current policy. That was a perfect example of an advanced and high plane of bipartisan dialogue. Members from both parties, experts from around the country, convened in that Iraq Study Group, made recommendations to the administration and to Congress. Many of those recommendations received widespread praise and support but have not been implemented, and the gentleman from Pennsylvania has been working to attempt to take those recommendations and move them forward, take them off the shelf and move them forward in our policy.

I yield to my good friend from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. ISRAEL for helping organize this Special Order this evening, and I do want to commend you for what you've been doing to help try to change the tone of this institution. You're absolutely right when you talk about the level of noise, the partisan vitriol.

I think we all realize that many of our constituents come to us from time to time, and they see partisanship for the sake of partisanship. They don't always see the philosophical differences that may underlie those partisan debates. They get annoyed with it, and they see carping and whining. They hear Republicans criticizing Democrats

over their policies, Democrats criticizing Republicans. And I think at times they would just like us to turn the temperature down, improve the tone and try to find solutions to the problems that face us, especially on issues of war and peace.

It was after the Second World War in the late 1940s and right up until the demise of the former Soviet Union, this Nation seemed to have a bipartisan policy to carry us through the cold war. It was called the policy of containment, and that doesn't mean that everybody in Congress felt universally that containment was a great policy, and they might have disagreed with certain aspects of that policy. But nevertheless, containment was the policy and it was able to survive from one administration to the next. Whether that be a Democrat or Republican administration, the policy survived, and each administration may have had a different spin on it and tweaked that policy, but it was the policy of this country.

And I think that our enemies understood that. We all understood that there was a Soviet threat, and we as Americans came together during that Cold War and eventually were successful. We outlasted the Soviet Union, and here we are in Iraq.

I think the American people have reached a point where they'd like us to develop that same kind of bipartisan consensus as we deal with the threats that face us today, the threats from violent extremists, people who are represented by al Qaeda we know who want to do great damage to us, who have made statements to the effect that they want to kill 4 million Americans, 2 million children.

So the American people expect us to work together, and Iraq certainly is part of this whole debate because, of course, al Qaeda has a significant presence in that country. And I do want to thank you once again for helping to facilitate this dialogue. Because of your efforts and many others, we were able to talk about the Iraq Study Group and the recommendations presented there.

Also, we may hear from some of our other colleagues later tonight, people like Congressmen TANNER and CASTLE, TANNER a Democrat from Tennessee and CASTLE a Republican from Delaware, who have talked at great length about the need for a bipartisan compact on Iraq. And they really set forth several principles that they thought that we could all agree to as we move forward.

And one of those first principles they talked about was that we could agree in Congress that we need to end the political infighting over the conflict in Iraq and commit immediately to a truly bipartisan dialogue on these issues that we're facing, and that was I think really their first main point. And many of us have signed on to that compact, an even number of Republicans and Democrats, and I think that's very important.

And we came to an agreement on many of those issues, and I won't elaborate them all right now because I think some others may want to talk about them, but I think it is absolutely critical. Those points of interest of policy in this bipartisan compact on Iraq are entirely consistent, in my view, with the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group, another very significant initiative headed by former Secretary of State James Baker and former distinguished Congressman Lee Hamilton that talked about a lot of things I think many of us agree on.

For example, we all agree that there shouldn't be permanent bases in Iraq, and you came up with the idea of a status of forces agreement in lieu of permanent bases, just a status of forces agreement just like our Nation has with other countries where we have a military presence, whether that be in Germany or Korea, like we had in the Philippines at one time, where our country enters into agreements with those governments to really state the nature of our presence and what the presence would be. And it's also certainly important to the government that we'll be dealing with, whether it be in Iraq or elsewhere, to help give them legitimacy.

So that was an idea that you came up with, and again, I think it's an issue that we can all agree to on a very broad bipartisan basis.

There are other issues, too, but I won't belabor them all tonight, but I think something you said to me a few weeks ago I think is worth repeating, and it's this: That as our constituents from time to time watch C-SPAN and they hear the noise, they hear the rancor and they sometimes get a little frustrated and throw up their hands about what's happening in Congress, and I think you said it was one of your constituents who pointed out after the last time we did one of these bipartisan Special Orders, they said that we were making C-SPAN safe for children once again, and for that, I want to give you a lot of credit, but there's a lot of truth to that.

Hopefully, because of these types of activities that we are conducting here tonight, more people will be likely to turn on C-SPAN and listen to I hope what will be a very thoughtful and constructive dialogue on one of the pre-eminent issues that's facing this country.

□ 2145

Mr. ISRAEL. I yield time to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. LAMPSON).

Mr. LAMPSON. I certainly agree with everything that Mr. DENT has said and that Mr. GILCHREST has said and that you, Mr. ISRAEL, have said. I think it's worth repeating some of it. I think it's worth emphasizing the importance of this being a first step and really trying to change the attitude of our body to achieve what the Founding Fathers of this Nation attempted when they designed this body, which is supposed to

be deliberative. It's supposed to be able to come together with tolerance.

I was looking at the words that are embedded in this desk here before us that we should listen with respect to each other, and words that Mr. DENT just gave us as far as where we can go, what we can be doing to begin to craft a direction for us.

Just this past weekend, I was at a ceremony with many Gold Star Mothers, parents who had lost their sons or daughters in either Afghanistan or in Iraq. I guess all of us have friends or parents or grandparents or someone that has lost someone there, pastors in our districts, perhaps, who are mourning the loss of some of our best and bravest that America has to offer.

The best way that we can honor these soldiers, I guess, as Mr. GILCHREST was referring to a few moments ago, the best way that we can do things to honor them and family is to work together as our Founders and Framers envisioned to answer the difficult questions that are facing us.

I think that it's tremendous that the Center Aisle Caucus has taken the step. I wanted to congratulate you and the other members who have started to ask Members of our Congress to join us. I hope that other colleagues will grow this into a large body.

I would like to hear some of the things that you are proposing at this time to move us forward on the issue of Iraq.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentleman.

Let me focus on just one very specific bipartisan solution that the Center Aisle Caucus has proposed. The gentleman from Pennsylvania alluded to it. It's a status of forces agreement.

At the end of the cold war, the United States had permanent status of forces agreements with about 40 countries. Today the number has grown to more than 90, which means that the United States Government has status of forces agreements with nearly half of the countries comprising the world community. Now, what is a status of forces agreement?

A status of forces agreement is essentially a negotiated document between the United States Government and a host government where we have a military presence that governs the relationship between the military and that government. It governs our criminal justice issues. It governs a variety of diplomatic and protocol issues.

Now, I have been told on my visits to Iraq and in my conversations with Iraqi officials here at home and with American officials that one of the concerns that the population of Iraq has is that we are going to be there forever, that we want to occupy Iraq forever.

We don't want to occupy Iraq forever. We don't want to be there one day longer than we need to be. If I had my way, we would be out tomorrow. The fact of the matter is that if the Iraqi people believe that we are there running the place and that they are not a sovereign government, they will never

have the capability to stand up their own ministries, to take care of their own security.

I have proposed on a bipartisan basis a resolution that asks the President to begin negotiating a status of forces agreement with the sovereign Iraqi Government. You can't expect a government to have a capability if we can't even negotiate an agreement between that government and our government with respect to the presence of military forces.

Iraq is a sovereign entity. One of the very important signals that we can send to the Iraqi people and to our population at home is the negotiation of the status of forces agreement.

Now, one of the great levels of frustration that I have is that whenever I raise this issue, I am told that we are pushing up against an open door. I am told that mostly everybody agrees that we should have a status of forces agreement in Iraq.

In fact, the Jones Commission, which was constituted as a group of highly expert military people assessing the condition of Iraqi security, when they made their recommendations, the number two recommendation in the Jones Commission report was, in fact, the submission of, and I will read directly from the report: "The second recommendation the Commission wishes to offer is that consideration be given to pursuing an agreement akin to a status of forces agreement with the Government of Iraq. Appropriately drawn, it would have the effect of codifying our relationship with the host nation, reinforcing its sovereignty and independence, and would be consistent with other such agreements we enjoy with many nations where we have a military presence."

So here you have yet another bipartisan commission recommending yet another idea that everybody can agree on, the Iraqis can agree to it, we can agree to it, Republicans and Democrats can agree to it, except that nobody is making it happen.

So I have proposed, as I said before, a resolution, a bipartisan resolution, that simply tells the President to submit a status of forces agreement to negotiation with the Iraqi Government. It begins this process. It signals the Iraqi people that we have no intention of owning Iraq. We are guests there, and they are the host government.

This is just one simple move in the right direction, a bipartisan move in the right direction; and I am hoping that the administration will listen to it and vigorously negotiate a status of forces agreement with Iraq.

I want to thank my friend from Pennsylvania, who has been active with me on that resolution, for his assistance, and would yield to him if he wants to comment further on it.

Mr. DENT. Again, I applaud you for your leadership on this issue. You are absolutely right, the Jones Commission really did give your legislation, without saying it, a very strong endorsement.

I think you pointed out another issue that I think we can all agree on about this issue of permanent bases. We have voted before against permanent bases, and your status of forces agreement, I think, really does provide the right answer to the question of permanent bases.

I would also point out too that should not be an open-ended commit in Iraq as has been reported and stated in the Iraq Study Group report.

Finally, I think there is another area where most of us degree in this Chamber, that what we want in this country is we want to make sure that we pursue our national interest as it relates to Iraq.

I think most of us realize that we cannot allow al Qaeda to have a base from which to operate in Iraq. I think that's something on which Republicans and Democrats can agree. I think we also agree that we cannot allow Iraq to become a failed state, that is, it becomes a threat to itself and to the region.

The third point I want to make on this, I think it's a very significant point, and perhaps we don't state it enough, and I think you will get a sense of this issue, if you have ever attended the funeral of someone who was killed in Iraq, as I know we all have, and I have families in my district, and Paris and Rush that have lost family members in recent months, and the issue really deals with honoring the service and sacrifice of our people who have invested so much or in some cases, as Abraham Lincoln said, gave that last full measure of devotion.

I have had numerous conversations, for example, with Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, and I know some of you have as well. We talk about these types of issues that, regardless of how one feels about the run up to this war, or how it has been executed, and the mistakes have been made along the way, critics of this administration, for example, have said they do not listen to many of the generals going into Iraq.

But I think it's very important that we do listen to generals as we transition down and go out of Iraq. I think that's critically important that we do this, and as we transition, that we remember the service and the sacrifice, remember our national interest, which is making sure al Qaeda has no base from which to operate and that we do not leave a failed state in our wake.

I just wanted to share those thoughts with you and, again, applaud you. I hope that your bill is one of those bipartisan bills that we will be able to bring to this floor for consideration, just as we did with the Tanner-Abercrombie-English bill today, which was a good start. I think we saw a broad consensus in this House that supported that legislation, and I think that's good for all of us.

Again, I would just applaud you for your work on the status of forces agreement.

Mr. ISRAEL. I would like to raise another very specific solution, bipartisan

solution that the Center Aisle Caucus has with respect to Iraq.

Last week, and I know my colleagues may be shocked to hear this, or perhaps they won't be shocked, perhaps they have had the same experience I have, but last week I met with an Iraqi refugee and his family. This individual was a translator for coalition forces, risked his life as a translator.

The work that he was doing was saving the lives of our forces, of our military people. He has a wife, a son and a disabled daughter. He decided that Iraq was no longer a safe place for his family. Why? Not just because of the war, but because of the service that he performed for the American military. So he applied for a special immigrant visa, and this is what he was told:

First you have to find a general to sign the form. He said, well, I don't know many generals who can sign this form.

Can I find someone else? He was told, no, the regulation is that you have to find a general. Well, he found a general who signed, who vouched for his credibility.

Then he was told, well, you can't apply for a special immigrant visa here in Iraq. You actually have to leave Iraq, go to another country and apply.

Well, that's just mind-boggling. Again, this is somebody who risked his life translating for American forces, and they have saved their lives, when they have translated what the bad guys were saying and what they were planning, and he was told, you have to leave Iraq to submit your visa application. So he found his way with his family to Amman, Jordan.

Then he was told, by the way, when you apply for this special immigrant visa, you have got to pay fees, hundreds and hundreds of dollars. This young man didn't have that kind of money. Can you imagine, he was, again, interpreting for our military and then told to leave the country and perhaps save his life; he had to pay a fee for himself, his wife, his son, his disabled daughter. Guess what, he came up with the money. Then he sat for a year in Jordan and waited for them to process the application.

I want to make sure that you understand the point that I am making. We are not saying we should open the doors for every single refugee, let them in without being properly vetted, without the proper security checks, without the background checks; but certainly someone who is providing services to the United States military, who had already been vetted by the military, who was saving lives, deserves better than, you have got to leave the country, you have got to find a general to sign the form, you have to pay hundreds of dollars for the form, you have to wait for a year, and then we will see if we can let you in.

To top it off, when he finally arrived here, this individual, who has critical military skills, the ability to read and understand what our enemies may be

saying about us, was told, well, you have got to find a job somewhere, maybe you can drive a taxi. I think the State Department and Department of Defense ought to be rolling out the red carpet for this individual.

One of the most glaring deficiencies we have in our military right now is an inability to translate documents, to hear what our enemies are saying about us. We ought to be hiring these people at whatever salary we can afford to pay them.

Then to add insult to injury, when he came here, he asked, well, how do I get various documents? There was no one area to give him some information, nothing.

So FRANK WOLF, who was the ranking Republican of the State and Foreign Operations Subcommittee on which I now serve, and I have introduced legislation that would make this system a little easier for people who have already established that they can help the United States.

Number one, we would allow our Ambassador in Iraq to have more authority so that he can vouch for the credibility of those who assisted U.S. efforts.

Number two, we allow those people to apply for visas at the U.S. Embassy or U.S. Consulate in Iraq. We don't force them to go to another country, Jordan or elsewhere.

Number three, we waive fees for those who have demonstrated their support for U.S. forces, their assistance, who have been properly vetted. We help find translators find work in the United States in the military and State Department, and we broaden relocation benefits.

Now, who can be against somebody who helped our Armed Forces by translating for them? I can't think of a single person who would say, no, they risked their lives, but we have to make them stay there. We have to make it harder for them and suggest this is another area of bipartisan agreement that we can agree on.

I am hopeful that the Israel-Wolf resolution will be passed by the House, passed by the Senate, and signed by the President.

I don't know whether any of my colleagues would like to comment on that particular legislation or share some of their thoughts, but I would be happy to yield to the gentleman from Maryland.

□ 2200

Mr. GILCHREST. I'd like to thank the gentleman from New York. And what you're describing, Mr. ISRAEL, is exactly the right thing that Members of Congress can do, certainly in a bipartisan fashion, to help facilitate the conflict in Iraq.

The military is doing a stunningly competent job at what they do. But this is war that is multidimensional. It's myriad complexities does not lend itself to, for example, that million-man Russian Army, that million-man Allied Army heading toward Berlin. This is a

multidimensional complex insurgency, a difficult cultural conflict, a geo-political conflict, an economic conflict. And it takes a united institution like the House and the Senate, to deal with the many different levels, for example, besides the Status of Force Agreement that we've been talking about here tonight that will give the Iraqi community, the Iraqi country, some dignity, about dealing with the issues of the day on a level playing field. The issue of an Iraqi interpreter trying to get to the United States can be effectively dealt with by the legislation that Mr. ISRAEL described. The Sunnis, the Shiites and the Kurds in Iraq have very different views, perspectives on how to govern their country. Each of them comes to this conflict, this political reconciliation debate from very different perspectives.

This past August, August 26, there was a Unity Accord Agreement signed between these three factions in Iraq. But that Unity Accord Agreement has not been carried through yet. What is the status of that?

Now, it's very difficult for that political process to be understood and then pursued by our military. It is something that Members of Congress can do.

What about the oil law, the hydro-carbon law, how to share the oil in Iraq? That is a political question. It's a question that we, in this House, can deal with much more effectively than the military can because it's a political process. We cannot deal with that in a political way if we're divided in a partisan way.

But the integration of our understanding that we represent America, as Members of Congress, not as political parties which, by the way, are not mentioned in the Constitution, that can effectively deal with this issue.

The British are leaving Basra. They are basically going to turn Basra over in a short period of time to the Iraqi Army. This is a predominantly Shiite region of Iraq. What is the relationship of the various Shiite groups in and around Basra with Iran?

Now, General Petraeus is responsible for the military activities inside Iraq. Who is responsible for the intergovernmental relations of various countries around the world, especially in the Middle East, and especially between Iran and southern Iraq where the Shites are dominant?

It's a political process. We, as Members of Congress, must understand how we can individually continue to probe to have a dialogue with Iran.

The issue of the surge bringing greater security, has it brought greater security? What does greater security mean when you have security forces on the ground if you're going to go beyond that? It's a political process, a greater political process than I think we have understood.

General Petraeus cannot call for Dayton negotiations where you bring the warring factions, like we did in the former Yugoslavia, to the United

States to Dayton, Ohio. The political process of reconciling those vast differences is a political process of this institution.

This institution doesn't represent 535 Secretaries of Defense or Secretaries of State. We represent the philosophy of integrity where dialogue is way more important, under these circumstances, than continued violence.

What about the refugees in Jordan and Syria, 2 million refugees, not to count the displaced persons in Iraq? Do we just ignore that? Do we say, well, that's the administration's problem, that's a military problem? No. We get together with dialogue with Assad and Syria, with the King of Jordan. We talk to people in the Middle East that have resources that can effectively deal with those people who may be starving to death.

Another thing, just to add to the complexity of it, one of the military strategies in the war in Vietnam by this country, a military strategy to achieve victory in Southeast Asia, was attrition. Is attrition a part of the military strategy in Iraq with the vast array of complex insurgencies? Some al Qaeda, some Sunni, some Shia, some from various other sects coming from Saudi Arabia or Iran or Jordan or Hezbollah? Attrition cannot be a strategy now. Attrition doesn't work. It didn't work in Vietnam.

How do we reconcile American military strategy? We do it in a debate on this House floor. The difficulties of an insurgency, the difficulties of culture, primitive, ancient cultures sometimes that we're dealing with, the economics, the resources, the religious differences, this is a political solution that General Petraeus has said many, many times. And where does that political reconciliation, the resolution of those vast myriad of problems begin? It begins here on the House floor. It begins with Members of Congress that we see here tonight, Mr. ISRAEL, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. DENT, myself and many other Members, there's quite a few. I think Mr. ISRAEL and I talked about the potential for 70 Members in a bipartisan working group that can bring, through dialogue, through ingenuity, through information, through intellect. Somebody once said that history is a vast early warning system. We should not complain about having hindsight. We have hindsight. If we have a dialogue, we understand history and we're going to make this work. This group here tonight can certainly lead the way.

I yield back to Mr. ISRAEL. Thank you very much.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentleman. Madam Speaker, I want to follow up on one point that the gentleman made, and then I'm going to yield to the gentleman from Texas and the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Madam Speaker, the gentleman talked about the importance of having a dialogue here on the floor of the House, and I agree. I don't know how we can expect Sunni and Shia and Kurd

to reconcile their differences when we seem to be incapable of reconciling our differences. I think we should lead by example.

But in addition to engaging one another on the floor of the House, I believe that leadership also involves bringing communities together. And one of the unique things that the Center Aisle Caucus will be doing under the leadership of the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. CRAMER) and the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. EMERSON) is to have town hall meetings in each others' districts on Iraq so that we can listen together to the broad range of opinions that are in our districts and bring that back in a bipartisan fashion.

And I'm very pleased, Madam Speaker, to have learned that our first bipartisan town hall meeting will be in the district of the gentleman from Maryland. Mr. CRAMER from Alabama, Mrs. EMERSON from Missouri and I will be traveling to the gentleman's district in Maryland to have a bipartisan town hall that he is convening, and I'm very much looking forward to engaging in that dialogue, and hoping that the gentleman will be educated by what my constituents believe, and that I will be educated by what his constituents believe.

With that, I will yield to the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. LAMPSON. Let me just raise another point. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. GILCHREST spoke of the amount of time that many of our forces served without break. We saw just recently a proposal made in the Senate that I would like for us to add to the list of things that you have already delineated and that we will be discussing, a way that we can assure that our troops get at least the amount of time off that their last deployment involved before being sent back into the war activity. That is a proposal that, in the Senate, drew significant bipartisan support. It came very, very close to passage, and it's one that, again, finds something that hardly anyone will disagree with. It is a change in the policy that we have to make, obviously, to the way that our military operates, and again, is to be debated on this floor. But if I may put that issue on the table for us to discuss some during the evening, I would appreciate that as well.

And I yield back.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank the gentleman. I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. GILCHREST. Could I just very quickly, one second on the point that Mr. LAMPSON made. That's one thing that's critical for this debate.

In World War II, 25 percent of the soldiers had what was called shell shock. That's 25 percent. In the Vietnam War era it was the same. In this war, it is the same. Of the hundreds of thousands of young men and women that travel through Iraq, not on one tour or two tours, sometimes three and four tours, the kind of traumatic stress that they

experience is horrendous. It's not only the psychological stress; it's the number of young men and women coming back with concussions. And that debate needs to take place. That resolution to that problem cannot happen with the military alone. It has to happen with a dialogue here about how we send our forces into harm's way and how much time they need for that break back home.

And the other issue with the problem of traumatic stress, when you're in combat and you experience that, it can expose itself in the individual with serious depression. And are our soldiers in Iraq being treated when they have those symptoms of depression? Are they given medication? These are a lot of questions that need to be answered that haven't been, I think, addressed clearly enough from, I use the term, because of the partisan cacophony of chaos that has happened here for such a long period of time.

Mr. LAMPSON. If the gentleman would yield. It's precisely the point of supporting our troops. This is the way to support our troops, to make sure that there is order in the manner in which they are deployed into combat and order in which they are called up and allowed to serve in certain different capacities, to make sure that we are debating the issues providing the resources, making sure that they have the equipment that's necessary as well as the moral support to make sure that their mission and their efforts are successful.

I yield back.

Mr. ISRAEL. And before I yield to the gentleman, I do want to point out that one of the proudest achievements that I believe this Congress has had is that we passed the largest single increase in veterans health care in the 77-year history of the VA. We did that several months ago. I think that's another shining example of bipartisan cooperation that puts the interests of our troops first and subjugates any partisan interests that sometimes occur here.

And with that, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania.

Mr. DENT. I'd like to thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

And Madam Speaker, there's one issue that I always recall very much, having visited Iraq in the summer of 2005 with at least one gentleman in this room tonight. And it dealt with the issue of reconciliation, although we really didn't talk as much as about it back then, but that's what the exercise was in.

You've mentioned this, as we talked about reconciliation in Iraq, you were very good enough to organize a meeting among the Center Aisle Caucus not so long ago where a prominent Iraqi in the diplomatic corps addressed us, and he talked about the need for reconciliation in our country. And we referred to the tribalism in Iraq that we saw that was frustrating to us and difficult for us to comprehend, and he sort of

noticed the tribalism in our country, as he referred to it, I believe, as in Republicans and Democrats and very hard for him to understand the type of chatter that was going on here. So the point is there's reconciliation needed here in America as well as in Iraq.

But one issue of reconciliation that I learned about in Iraq, Madam Speaker, was in August of 2005 when I met a fellow named Albert Chowanski, Jr., who was from a town about 45 miles from my hometown of Allentown, Pennsylvania. He lives in Frackville, Pennsylvania; been in the Middle East for about 30 years. He was working for a contractor, the Siemens Corporation, and was building a power plant, helping to construct a power plant in the Taza area near Kirkuk. And he told me the challenges of building a power plant while people are shooting mortars at you, and how difficult that was. And I asked him, "Well, how did you deal with the situation?" He said, "Well, the mortar attacks weren't very effective, to be perfectly candid, but nevertheless it was troublesome and made life difficult for us." And so he said the way he dealt with it, he went out and he met with each of the tribal leaders, and that's a multiethnic area near Kirkuk. You have ethnic Turks or Turkmen, and you have Kurds and Sunni Arabs and Shia Arabs. And so he went out and he met with all the tribal leaders, and he gave jobs to members of each tribe. And he said, "You know, they all work together just fine, and everything went pretty quiet."

And my point is that here's a fellow who seemed to be an engineer of some sort. I think he was an electrical engineer, and he was out there trying to solve a problem from a very practical level. And we've seen a bit of that in Iraq, I think, in recent months. You've seen it in the Sunni areas that have been much talked about, the tribal leaders turning on al Qaeda, which is all very encouraging. But sometimes we talk about benchmarks and we talk about things that we expect the Iraqis to do, and we are frustrated with the pace of or lack of progress in that country from the higher levels.

□ 2215

But then we see some of these more local efforts at reconciliation that do bring a certain amount of encouragement and hope.

But I just wanted to share that with you tonight as something that we ought to think more about as we talk about this policy of how we deal with Iraq and as we try to deal with the issue from 60,000 feet in the air here. And as many of us have visited that country and we talk to a lot of folks who are in charge, sometimes life brings us unexpected events, and sometimes those events are positive, and I think we can learn from people who are on the ground.

Mr. ISRAEL. I thank my friend.

Madam Speaker, our time is drawing to a close; so I would like to summarize

some of the points that we have made and some of the very specific solutions that the Center Aisle Caucus is pursuing.

Number one, we have a bipartisan resolution that would direct the President to submit and negotiate a status of forces agreement with the sovereign government of Iraq.

Number two, we believe that if you are a refugee who was providing a critical lifesaving service for U.S. forces as a translator, as an interpreter, or some related position and that you have received death threats and that you want to get your family out of harm's way that we shouldn't make it almost impossible for you to do so, that a compassionate nation would reward you rather than building roadblocks. So we have proposed legislation cosponsored by Mr. WOLF from Virginia and me that would make it a little bit easier for those who have provided a service to the United States military to seek special immigrant status here.

Number three, we believe that the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group report ought to be incorporated into policy and not just sit on a shelf, the recommendations for a diplomatic surge and all the other recommendations. Now, we may not agree on every single one of these elements, and we may not agree on every single one of the bills that the Center Aisle Caucus has put forward, but we are trying to build that critical mass and develop consensus on some clear directions.

Next, the Center Aisle Caucus will be visiting one another's districts to hold bipartisan town hall meetings because we may not have all of the ideas here. Our jobs are Members of Congress, but we are representatives. We are supposed to represent the views that we hear. So we will be going out on a bipartisan basis to one another's districts to hear those views.

One other thing that I didn't have an opportunity to mention and we will mention it in the future is that our colleagues from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) and from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) are working on a bipartisan Center Aisle assessment of the War Powers Act. As our colleague from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) said at one of our dinners, "I fear that one day we as Members of Congress will wake up and find out that we have just launched World War Three and we are reading about it in the newspaper." He is very concerned, as is Mr. ENGLISH, that the War Powers Act needs to be assessed. We want to make sure that we are exercising our constitutional oversight responsibility and that we don't find ourselves in a war without that proper congressional authority and oversight. So they will be convening an assessment of the War Powers Act and making some legislative recommendations.

I want to conclude by reiterating something that I said when we opened up, Madam Speaker. We are not going to end the war tomorrow through the Center Aisle Caucus. None of these resolutions will end the war tomorrow as

much as many of us would like to end the war tomorrow and may vote to end the war tomorrow. But we have had enough screaming at one another from both sides of the aisle, and that has not ended the war up to now. We have an obligation to the people that I saw yesterday, that my colleagues Mr. DENT and Mr. LAMPSON and Mr. GILCHREST have been visiting at our military hospitals and at funerals. They don't want us to harp on left and right. They want us to figure out a way forward. They want us to put aside disagreements that have paralyzed us and move forward on what we can agree to. That is exactly what we intend to continue focusing on.

I thank my colleagues for spending time on this very late evening, and I hope, Madam Speaker, that the American people understand the importance of this engagement, this reconciliation, this dialogue to move not left or right but forward.

Did the gentleman want to close?

Mr. DENT. If I may, Madam Speaker, I just hope that our exercise tonight has done just what you want us to do to make C-SPAN safe for children again, and I hope this exercise has accomplished that goal.

Mr. ISRAEL. Madam Speaker, we will never be the Disney Channel, but it is a good start.

THE DEMOCRATIC AGENDA,
WRONG FOR THE NATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ). 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. Madam Speaker, as always, I very much appreciate the privilege to address you here on the floor of the House of Representatives.

There are a number of issues that are before us this evening that have accumulated over the last week or two that I believe are worthy of our consideration and our discussion here, and among them are a couple of debates that we had today. And perhaps the first of which was a fairly intense debate that we had on a bill that addressed the Iraq war, and that would be H.R. 3087, and this is a piece of legislation that came out what seems like a weekly effort to weaken the resolve of our troops, make their job harder in Iraq, seeking to answer to MoveOn.org and energizing the anti-war liberal left in America and energizing our enemies across the world, including and I mean specifically al Qaeda.

And, Madam Speaker, many times I have come to the floor and spoken to this issue and reminded Americans that we are at war. And when a Nation is successful in a difficult war, they pull together and bind together in the same will. There was an address made here on the floor talking about World War I, World War II, and other conflicts we have been in as well as the Iraq war that we are in right now. I

would take us back to World War II as the central example of the time when the Nation pulled together. And there were rations here in the United States. Most everybody found a way to contribute to the war effort. My father went to the South Pacific for 2½ years. My mother tied parachutes in a parachute factory. The unemployment rate was down to 1.2 percent, and as far as I know, that is the lowest unemployment rate that this country has had. And that was at the same time that many of the women went to work that traditionally had not.

This Nation pulled together, put 16 million Americans in uniform to defend ourselves on two major fronts, the war in Europe and the war in the Pacific, and mobilized an entire Nation, an entire people.

The movies were about patriotism and defending the American way of life. We had pride in our culture and who we were. And the legacy that flows from that is that the United States, ultimately after we walked our way through the Cold War, we emerged as the unchallenged only superpower and the greatest Nation on Earth. That is the legacy of the selfless sacrifice and the single will of a people when they came together when they saw that they were attacked from without, threatened from without, and they saw that the world was in danger of being consumed by totalitarian powers.

And after that Second World War, we went through the Cold War. Again the world was in danger of being consumed by totalitarian powers. But the will of the American people during the Second World War was unquestioned. They understood that our job was to defeat the will of our enemies, and that meant that we had to apply military might in both directions, to the east and to the west, break down their ability to conduct war; but in the end destroying their ability to tactically attack our military was just a means to an end. The end was to defeat the will of the German people and defeat the will of the Japanese people, which the bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki did finally defeat the will of the Japanese people.

Now here we are engaged in this war against al Qaeda, against radical extremist jihadists, people who have committed themselves and say they have a religious belief that their path to salvation is in killing us. It is our way of life that threatens them. And they have come across the oceans and attacked us here on our soil. And they have global plots that weekly there's some kind of information that emerges about sometimes second and third generation immigrants who come into the Western European countries and determine that they might be sent back to Pakistan or one of the other countries over in the Middle East to be trained to be a terrorist and they come back into the Western society and plot and sometimes successfully attack people from Great Britain and in other countries in Europe. And we have been fortunate in

this country not to have an effective attack against us since September 11, 2001.

But the enemy that we are against, the enemy we are fighting across the world, this global terrorist army out there that are rooted in al Qaeda in that philosophy and their affiliates, and it is a loose affiliation even within al Qaeda itself, the principle enemy in our battlefield that is Iraq is al Qaeda in Iraq. That has been clearly brought to this Congress, and it has been a message that has been delivered to us by General Petraeus, Ambassador Crocker, and others. Who is our enemy? Al Qaeda in Iraq. The number one enemy. There are a number of other enemies there, and there is a struggle going on for power.

But we are in the business of defeating the will of our enemy. Our brave troops have put their lives on the line, and many of them have given their lives in that effort to project freedom to that part of the world, protect our freedom here, and defeat the will of the enemy. They lost their lives, sanctified the soil in Iraq with their blood to defeat the will of our enemy in Iraq.

And yet here on the floor of the House of Representatives, since the gavel in and the passing of the gavel in this new 110th Congress, there has been almost weekly, with only two or three exceptions that I can think of, at least one resolution or a bill or a piece of legislation here on the floor of the House of Representatives that serves to do what? It serves to encourage our enemies, to encourage the will of our enemies, and weaken the will of the American people.

So if this war is not to be won, and I believe it will be won and I believe that the indications that are coming from Iraq since the beginning of the surge, information such as the lowest monthly loss of American lives was in this past month of September, the lowest month in the last 14 months, this at a time when we have upped the troop numbers over there by at least 30,000 and engaged them in an aggressive posture of searching and destroying our enemy and hunting them out in the neighborhoods and our troops that are actually living in the neighborhoods rather than in their compounds, that kind of information is coming to us.

And I have been to Iraq five times. The last time was towards the end of July. The things that I saw there gave me a preliminary view of the report that General Petraeus would give us here in this Congress in just this past month, a couple of weeks ago. The news has been encouraging. And, of course, no one can declare victory there, but one can certainly see that we have made significant progress. It's moving in the right direction. All of this, Madam Speaker, in spite of, not because of but in spite of, these demoralizing resolutions that have come to the floor of this Congress.

And this one that was out here today is another demoralizing resolution,