

President's so-called surge, the escalation of troops into Iraq, was that Iraqi forces would actually be on the front lines, while American troops would be providing support.

In fact, a White House fact sheet from the day the President announced escalation, says that the primary element of the strategy is to let the Iraqis lead.

Well, the escalation has begun, and not only are they not leading, we are lucky if they even show up. That is right. Reportedly, as many as 50 percent of the Iraqi troops expected and needed for the Baghdad operation aren't reporting to duty. This doesn't bode well, Madam Speaker. American troops will now bear the brunt of what promises to be deadly, violent, urban warfare.

We are now finding out that the escalation will be twice as large as the President has said, requiring 48,000 additional troops, as opposed to 21,000, as originally announced by the President. Now, if Iraqis aren't prepared for the fight, it is easy to imagine still more U.S. soldiers being sent into the grinder. The surge has barely begun, and already, it is failing.

It is clear, furthermore, that the Maliki government is powerless to live up to its promises. Maliki himself owes much of his political authority to one of Iraq's most powerful militia leaders. So how, exactly, is he going to keep Iraqi communities safe from the militias?

On their way out the door, General Abizaid and General Casey warned that increasing force levels just absolves Iraqis of the responsibility for their own security, and they were absolutely right.

In the State of the Union address, the President said, and I quote him, ". . . it's time for [the Iraqi] government to act. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad . . . They pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction . . . and they need to follow through."

If they don't, where is the "or else" in the President's words, and where are the consequences if they don't meet these benchmarks and honor these commitments?

Madam Speaker, it is time for fewer carrots and more sticks. Edward Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies put it succinctly. He said, "it's time for the Iraqis to make their own history." Or, in the words of Luttwak's New York Times op-ed piece yesterday, he said, "To Help Iraq, Let It Fend for Itself."

There is only one solution, a quick military withdrawal from Iraq. I have a bill that was sponsored by 33 other Members of Congress that will do precisely that. H.R. 508, the Bring Our Troops Home and Iraq Sovereignty Restoration Act will do exactly what we need. It will take our troops out of harm's way and force Iraqis to secure their own country. We won't leave

them high and dry. The bill calls for an international stabilization force, but one that would come only at the request of the Iraqi government for no more than 2 years, and with other nations taking on the burden as well.

H.R. 508 will have our troops home in 6 months, leaving behind no permanent military bases and turning over control of the Iraqi oil to the Iraqi people. We will not abandon Iraq. We will continue to be a partner in the reconciliation and reconstruction, but it is time for us to end the military occupation that has failed so tragically. There are no good answers here, but one thing is for sure: There is nothing more our soldiers can do to bring peace to the streets of Baghdad or any other part of Iraq. If anything, our continued presence is aggravating an already combustible situation, which, in fact, we created. We created this situation with our invasion in the first place. Madam Speaker, it is time for Iraqis to defend Iraq, and it is time for American troops to come home.

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

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

HONORING TAYLOR SIAS AND KEVIN TEMPLAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam Speaker, I rise today to talk about two outstanding youths in my district and to highlight, I think, something that we do too rarely here and across America. We talk a lot about our young people in their teens playing video games, not getting involved in their communities, not trying new sports, not enjoying the outdoors.

Today I am very privileged to talk about two such individuals in my district who are breaking the mold and are, I think, achieving at high levels, but they are also doing it by enjoying the great outdoors and also bringing strength to their communities.

First, I would like to recognize Taylor Sias from Weston, West Virginia, for representing our State in the 2007 Bassmaster CastingKids National Semi-Finals Competition in Gadsden, Alabama.

Taylor is a sixth grade student at Robert L. Bland Middle School in Weston and is a three-time State champion. Taylor previously competed in the 2004 semifinals in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and in the 2005 semifinals in Orlando, Florida. The Bassmaster CastingKids challenge is to flip, pitch and cast a hookless lure into a bull's eye target. Sounds kind of hard to me.

BASS developed the Bassmaster CastingKids program in 1991, open to

young people in two age groups, 7-10 and 11-14. The goals of this competition are to involve America's youth in fishing and to foster in each participant an appreciation and a concern for our outdoors. Participants compete in local events conducted by affiliated BASS federation national clubs. Local event winners proceed to their State finals where each State then determines two to represent their State at the national semifinals. From the national semifinals, only 10 contenders advance on to the national championship. Since its inception, over 1.5 million youth have participated in the program, and over \$2 million in cash prizes and scholarships have been awarded.

I would again like to congratulate Taylor and thank him for proudly representing West Virginia at the 2007 Bassmaster CastingKids National Semifinals Championship and wish him the best of luck in becoming an accomplished angler.

Madam Speaker, the other youth I would like to talk about today is Kevin Templan of Charlestown, West Virginia. Kevin became the first member of Boy Scout Troop 82 to achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. His commitment to family and community and church played an integral part in this achievement. Kevin worked on a beautification project at Saint Peter's Catholic Cemetery for his Eagle Scout project.

He is recognized by the Boy Scout National Honor Society, Order of the Arrows, for adhering to the traditions and values of scouting. A senior at Jefferson County High School, Kevin is a drummer in the Cougar Marching Band. He attends Saint James Greater Catholic Church where he will soon be a member of the Knights of Columbus. Kevin enjoys reading, origami and spending time with his younger brother and sister.

The Templan family recently moved to my district from Bryan, Texas, and we welcome them. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm West Virginia welcome to Kevin and his family. Jefferson County is fortunate to host such an accomplished young leader. It is a pleasure to serve such devoted young citizens like Kevin in West Virginia's Second District.

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

(Mr. ELLISON 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 Wisconsin (Mr. KAGEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KAGEN 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 Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

BLACK AIDS AWARENESS DAY

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

Ms. LEE. Madam Speaker, today is Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day, a day when we urge African Americans to get educated, get involved and get tested. On Monday, the House passed my resolution H. Con. Res. 35, recognizing the goals and the ideals of Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day.

The global HIV/AIDS pandemic is simply devastating black America, Africa and the Caribbean in disproportionate numbers to the rest of the world. With 40 million people infected around the world, over 1 million of which are right here in the United States, this disease is as much a problem in South Africa as it is in my district in Alameda County.

In the United States, among young people, among women, and among men, African Americans are at the most risk of getting infected with HIV, of developing AIDS and of dying of this disease. The unfortunate reality is that to be black in America is to be at greater risk of HIV and AIDS.

The numbers are staggering, but let me just mention a few specifically. According to CDC, in 2005, African American women accounted for 66 percent of all new HIV/AIDS cases among women. Compared to white women, African American women were 25 times more likely to be infected. Today, AIDS is the number one, number one cause of death among African American women between the ages of 25 and 34. That is, quite frankly, just mind boggling.

Black gay men are also heavily affected by this disease. In 2005, CDC surveyed black gay men in five United States cities and found that 46 percent, 46 percent were HIV positive. The situation is just as stark in my own district. In Alameda County, over 6,600 cases of AIDS have been diagnosed since 1980, and nearly 4,000 people have died. Of those numbers, African Americans represent well over 40 percent of the cumulative AIDS cases and AIDS deaths in the county.

In 1998, we became the first county in the nation to declare a state of emergency in the African American community. We tapped into the emergency funds and started a community-wide task force that included local AIDS service organizations, elected officials and county health departments. Together, this task force sought to provide a focused and very targeted response to the AIDS epidemic within the African American community in Alameda County.

At the same time, here in Congress, with the leadership of my colleague, Congresswoman MAXINE WATERS, who

was then chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, and Congresswoman DONNA CHRISTENSEN, and, of course, with President Clinton signing this, we created the Minority AIDS Initiative in 1998. I have to thank the gentlelady from California for her leadership in helping us break the silence here on Capitol Hill with regard to the devastating cases and the situation of African Americans in America as it relates to HIV and AIDS, and recognizing the inability of our traditional programs to serve the minority communities.

The Minority AIDS Initiative was specifically designed to build capacity and to expand HIV/AIDS outreach activities so that we can target programs and services, target them directly to those who need them. It took us 8 years, but I am happy to say that, last year, we finally codified the Minority AIDS Initiative by passing the Ryan White Treatment Modernization Act at the end of the Congress last year, which included the Minority AIDS Initiative.

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But now, of course, what do we have to do? We have got to fully fund it. We need a minimum of \$61 million, and that is just a drop in the bucket. We need billions of dollars to address this pandemic. And at the same time we have got to go further. We have got to get to the real factors that are ultimately driving the epidemic in the African American community: poverty and discrimination, the lack of affordable housing, the disproportionate rates of incarceration among black men, poor access to care, and limited cultural competency for health service providers.

All of these deserve our attention and deserve action. We can start to get at one of these factors by ending really what this is, is a head-in-the-sand approach to HIV prevention that is turning our prisons, really turning our prisons into a breeding ground for this disease.

We need to provide routine, but rigorous opt-out HIV testing that is linked with treatment for all incarcerated persons. Congresswoman WATERS, I am sure she will talk about her bill in her presentation. But this is, again, a major step in the right direction. We have got to pass Congresswoman WATERS' bill, my bill, H.R. 178, which is called the Justice Act. This would allow condoms in our prisons and demand accountability in stopping the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections among incarcerated persons.

We have got to do this. This is a crisis. And we have to do this part, our part, in Congress to make sure that this happens. We must continue to work with advocates and health providers and faith communities to raise awareness, to get tested and to get active in our communities.

We participated last year with the International Aids Conference in To-

ronto, and there were wonderful, unbelievable activists at that conference from America, African Americans, who came to Toronto to raise the plight of the African American AIDS pandemic to the international level.

Many were amazed that here in America we have a pandemic that is just killing many of our communities. At that conference many of our civil rights organizations recommitted themselves to making the stamping out of HIV and AIDS a top priority in terms of their overall objectives.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. SOLIS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

LIFT THE RESTRICTION ON MEMBER TRAVEL ON PERSONAL AIRCRAFT

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

Mr. PEARCE. Madam Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to address the group today. I represent the southern district of New Mexico, New Mexico 2. I come with a chart today, and with a map of the district.

Now, if you can visualize, I live all the way on the east side of the State, Hobbs, New Mexico. We are about 3 miles from the Texas border and represent all of the way to Arizona. Now, it is almost a 9- to 9½-hour drive to come across to the Silver City area, and then if we have to go further north up into the Zuni area, it takes an additional 2 to 3 hours.

So each time I go home is a lot of miles. On a 3-day weekend, we have made up to 1,000 miles. On the 10-day breaks, we have been known to make up to 2,500 miles with events all of the way across. And then on our first 30-day break, our August break in my first year here, we had 29 different motel rooms and about 6,500 miles that we made to cover this large district.

Now, my particular approach today is to talk about a rule that the new majority put into place when we voted on January 4, 2007. I will read from those rules, House Resolution 6, section 207, rule 23, item 15(a). A Member, Delegate or Resident Commissioner may not use personal funds, official funds or campaign funds for a flight on a nongovernment airplane that is not licensed by the FAA to operate for commission or hire.

Now, in the FAA there are basically two categories of operating for hire. There is the category of airlines. Those operate under section 121 of the FAA rules. The second section that is predominately used is section 135; that is, the charters. Those are the private aircraft that are used that you call, and