

the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

SCOOTER LIBBY CONVICTION

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

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week brought news of the conviction on four counts of perjury, obstruction of justice and lying to Federal investigators of the Vice President's former Chief of Staff, Scooter Libby.

It is easy to forget exactly what this case was about and its precise bearing on the ongoing bloody chaos in Iraq, so I think it is important to refresh our memories.

What did Mr. Libby lie about? He lied about his alleged role in blowing the cover of a CIA agent named Valerie Plame Wilson. And why would Scooter Libby or anyone else in the White House even consider doing such a thing? Political retribution, of course. Valerie Wilson's husband, Ambassador Joseph Wilson, had been a public critic of the Bush administration's march to war. He had traveled to Africa at the behest of the CIA and concluded that there was nothing to the President's claim, made in the State of the Union no less, that uranium from Niger was helping Saddam Hussein build a nuclear weapon.

Ambassador Wilson dared to question the White House on a critical matter of policy, indeed a matter of war and peace. He dared to suggest that they had taken the Nation to war under false pretenses. So they destroyed his wife's career, and in so doing may have imperiled our national security.

Remember, this is the administration that guards information so closely that it considers its secrets sacrosanct, that has lectured others for leaking classified information, but they had no qualms about divulging sensitive information about someone else, someone who uses her undercover status to help protect the Nation. Why did they out her? Because she is married to someone who leveled a legitimate and accurate criticism at the White House.

It just goes to show, Mr. Speaker, they were willing to stop at absolutely nothing to discredit anyone who undermined their case for war, a case that was based on exaggeration at best, and outright lies at worst.

After the Libby verdict was rendered, a former national chairman of the Republican Party tried to pooh-pooh the matter by telling the USA Today, and I quote him, "When you get down to it, it was one case involving one guy."

Similarly, the Washington Post concluded its editorial by saying that the Wilson-Plame case and Mr. Libby's conviction tells us nothing about the war in Iraq. I couldn't possibly disagree more. Mr. Libby wasn't lying about whether he revealed Valerie Wilson's favorite color. Mr. Libby's conduct was part of a campaign of deceit intended

to shut down any and all objections to the war. And why did they need a campaign of deceit? Because there was no legitimate reasonable cause for war without the specter of weapons of mass destruction, without the disgraceful scare tactic of warning that we don't want, and they said this, the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.

It is the responsibility of Congress now to delve even deeper into the manipulation of pre-war intelligence. I am eager to hear Mrs. WILSON's testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform on Friday, and I hope this is just one of many such inquiries.

Even as we are currently immersed in a debate right here in the House about how to end our occupation of Iraq, it is critical that we hold people to account for the mistakes and the misdeeds that launched this disastrous war and cost 3,200 Americans their lives.

Justice was done in the case of Mr. Libby, but I hope when it comes to Iraq we can bring about justice in a broader sense, by restoring Iraq's sovereignty and letting its people determine their own future, by becoming a reconstruction partner and not a military occupier in Iraq, by promoting stability in the region instead of being a catalyst for violence, a catalyst for terror, by completing a fully funded withdrawal from Iraq and bringing our troops home at last.

RENAMING THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

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. Mr. Speaker, in 1947, when the National Security Act became law, Congress declared that the Department of Defense consists of four distinct military services, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy and the Marine Corps. But the act spells out the mission of today's Marine Corps and clearly indicates that the Corps is a legal distinct military service within the Department of Navy; that is, the Marine Corps and the Navy are coequal partners. The Marines do not serve beneath the Navy, they are a team. There is not a subordinate relationship between the Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps. They are equal partners of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and it is time the Department of Navy recognizes the equal status.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I have again introduced legislation, H.R. 346, to change the name of the Department of the Navy to the Department of Navy and Marine Corps. I am encouraged that this change has been included in the House defense authorization bill for the past several years, but it has not been accepted by the Senate.

I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the passage of this legisla-

tion, and I hope this year the House position will prevail in the Senate. This legislation is not about changing the responsibilities of the Secretary or reallocating resources, there is no cost to this change. Instead, it is about showing the Nation the true meaning of the department and recognizing the Marine Corps' extreme importance to our national security.

When the President's top military adviser, General Peter Pace, is wearing the uniform of the Marine Corps, it is time to realize that change is long overdue. The Marines that are fighting today deserve this recognition. Sadly, in the past 4 years over 900 Marines have been killed while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. When the Department of the Navy writes the families of Marines who have been killed, their families deserve to receive that letter from the Department of the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Mr. Speaker, I have on the floor this afternoon an enhancement of the orders for the Silver Star for Sergeant Michael Bitz of the United States Marine Corps who was killed in the Iraq war for freedom. He was cited with a Silver Star received by his family after his death. I brought this to the floor to emphatically show the difference of what it is today and what it should be tomorrow.

The first poster is an enlargement of the actual orders from the Secretary of Navy. And you can see the Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C., with the zip code and the Navy flag. Again, this was a Marine who died for this country.

If you look at the second poster that is beside me, you will see what it can be if this bill becomes law and is accepted by the Senate and sent to the President for signing. The order should be a flag, the Navy flag, the Secretary of the Navy and Marine Corps with the Marine flag.

Mr. Speaker, as I close, this is all about fairness and equality because there are four distinct services, the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Air Force. I think it is only right and befitting that two great services that have such a tradition and a heritage be treated as partners, and that is what this legislation does, the Department of Navy and Marine Corps.

I hope my colleagues on both sides of the aisle will join us in this effort, and let's recognize two great services, the Navy and the Marine Corps, as partners and a team.

With that, I ask God to please bless our men and women in uniform and their families. And I ask God to please hold in His loving arms the families who have lost a loved one dying for this country. And I ask God to continue to bless America.

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

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

IRAQ

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

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, good evening.

Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago I had the privilege to visit our service men and women serving in Iraq, and I saw for myself what is really happening on the ground.

I met with several service men and women from cities that I represent, the city of Azusa, East Los Angeles and West Covina in California. I spoke with troop commanders, Iraqi women representing NGOs, and two parliamentary women.

My trip to Iraq confirmed my belief that we must supply better support for our troops, including redeployment out of Iraq. But supporting our troops means securing our troops and making sure we minimize the risks they really face. Our troops, as you know, are overextended. The length of time they are spending in Iraq is not only demanding, but exhausting. For many of them, it is not their first tour either, this is their second, third and maybe even fourth.

While our troops remain committed to their work, they are concerned about the impact their duty is having on them and their families. The time they spend with their families is shorter with each tour of duty.

Our troops are concerned about the lack of adequate equipment. Some troops lack the basic equipment needed to do their job, like body armor. In fact, one soldier told me they don't have light bulbs. I said light bulbs for what? They said well, Congresswoman, for our vehicles. When we are asked to go into the communities, if we don't have light bulbs on our vehicles we can't see. Another one mentioned they didn't have scissors, and I said, Why do you need scissors? And he said because if one of my men gets hit, I need to have scissors to be able to bandage and provide whatever help that person needs.

In some cases they told me that the equipment they use is unreliable due to overexcessive use. And I was appalled to learn that some service members are forced to share their equipment with recent arrivals. The new members of the service that we are sending in in this surge or escalation are actually taking equipment away from those who are being currently deployed there. Without the proper equipment, our troops face significant and unnecessary risk to their lives.

Supporting our troops also means redeployment and an Iraqi nation that will govern itself and its people. Unfortunately, the best plan President Bush offers is another blank check request for his already failed policies.

In California, the 32nd Congressional District that I represent, as you can see, 13 of our sons have already given their lives, the ultimate sacrifice. U.S. casualties, as you know, are close to 3,200, and more than 24,000 service men and women have been injured or permanently disabled, and more than half of those will not be able to lead normal lives.

This blank check that President Bush provides must end. By deploying additional service men and women into combat, the President shows just how out of touch he is with the real needs of our troops and the reality of the situation. The increase of troops will do nothing to improve the long-term security situation.

The President's escalation plan ignores the very needs of these veterans. The crisis, as you know, at Walter Reed highlights the fact that this administration has not prioritized the health care needs of our returning veterans. And as Members of Congress, it is our responsibility to protect our troops and veterans when our Commander in Chief will not. We need a plan that will ensure that there will not be permanent bases in Iraq. And we need to ensure that all troops are provided with adequate equipment and training needed to do their job safely.

Our plan must require the Iraqis to take control of Iraq and bring other Arab states together to help solve this problem. Our plan must refocus also on Afghanistan. And our plan must ensure that our service men and women and veterans receive the best care available when they return home.

□ 1830

This includes traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, culturally competent health care, housing, and education.

The troops and their families have kept their promise to us. We must now keep our promise to them, and I am proud that we have made such a plan available. The U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health & Iraq Accountability Act, in my opinion, is key to this success. It supports our troops. It holds the administration accountable. It establishes a plan for redeployment, and provides for our veterans.

My trip to Iraq strengthened my belief that the right course of action is to redeploy our troops out of Iraq. Our men and women in uniform are doing their job, and we in Congress must do ours so that our troops will come home and receive the care that they deserve. We must not continue to turn our backs on those who proudly have served our Nation, and I will continue to fight and support our troops.

I look forward to their redeployment and their safe return to their families, to their friends, and to their loved ones, and I look forward to a resolution, and an Iraq governed by Iraqis, and a world safer and more secure for all of us. And I know our leadership will help to take us there.

PRISON INMATES HELP IN WAR EFFORT

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

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, behind the thick walls of some Federal prisons, inmates are being put to work. Not on chain gangs tarring roads and hacking rocks, but in prison factories.

Private industries are bringing their businesses behind the barbed wire fortresses, realizing the benefits of incarcerated inmates going to work. Prison industries are operated to achieve two goals: First, they occupy the prisoners' time to keep them busy and out of trouble. The second goal is to provide those incarcerated inmates a trade and valuable work experience, a trade and experience that can be applied to the American workforce once they leave the penitentiary. Prison industries give an inmate a sense of accomplishment and achievement, and the ability to have a chance to work and live as a law-abiding citizen beyond the prison walls.

In the Federal prison system, UNICOR, the Federal Prison Industries, Incorporated, contracts out to the Federal Bureau of Prisons and hires inmates to work behind those tall prison walls. The inmates earn 35 cents to \$1.15 an hour. Now, Mr. Speaker, this money is paid by private industries, not taxpayers.

And, here is the best part: The money that the inmates earn goes to, first, pay their fine; second, partial restitution to the victim through the Victims of Crime Act; and, third, the rest goes into a savings account that the inmate will get once they leave the penitentiary. This way, the prisoner literally earns his keep in the big house. He helps pay for the system he has created, relieving the taxpayers of this burden.

I have had the opportunity to tour one of these prison units in Beaumont, Texas, at the Beaumont Federal Correctional Complex in my congressional district. In the Beaumont Federal prison system, prison inmates craft state-of-the-art military helmets for our troops fighting in Iraq. I have one of those helmets right here with me, Mr. Speaker.

This is officially called by the Federal Government the "personal armor for ground troops helmet." I just call it a helmet. It is used by our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is made of Kevlar, and it provides our warriors protection from shrapnel and bullets. These helmets have been credited with saving several of our troops' lives in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Mr. Speaker, each month the inmates at the Beaumont Prison produce 30,000 of these helmets; 360,000 of them a year are being provided for our military. The Beaumont Prison factory also has the distinction of being the only UNICOR factory that produces these